

CHANGE OF HEART

by

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Stonebridge Entertainment
Kalola Productions

HEAR:

The Mama's and the Papa's singing "California Dreaming". The MUSIC is cranked up full volume as we

FADE UP ON

EXT BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA DAY

THE P.O.V. OF A BICYCLE as it races through city traffic, ignoring the rules of the road...up and down curbs, through crosswalks, red lights mean nothing.

PASSING THE SIGHTS of Berkeley...the Sather Gates at the entrance to the University, the Campanelle Tower rises up in the background. Nearby is Sproul Hall, the scene of many a protest.

It's the 1990's but the 1960's had a strong hold here and day-glow colors and "No War" bumper stickers didn't make a comeback. They never left.

The bicycle continues by Fat Apples restaurant. Blondie's Pizza. The People's Park. The streets are crowded. Vendors sell tie-dyed shirts, third world jewelry, cheapo sunglasses.

The bike finally pulls over on Telegraph Avenue in front of a funky bookstore...THE BOOKWORM.

REVERSE ANGLE to see...the bicycle rider. Surprisingly not a hot shot thirteen year old kid, but a WOMAN in her early 40's...SARAH MATHEWS.

Sarah has a mass of wavy hair, large chestnut eyes and great legs. Some women put it all together. Earrings, nails, shoes, a single hue. Other women don't give a damn. Sarah doesn't give a damn.

She takes off a WALKMAN. The Mama's and the Papa's fade out as she enters...

INT THE BOOKWORM SAME

Floor to ceiling books. And they're not arranged like Crown does it in easy-to-read display shelves. They're in cases, in stacks, in cartons.

Sarah flips on a radio...hear ROCK N' ROLL. Most bookstores are quiet. This one is noisy. The front door opens and an old WOMAN with a cane hobbles in.

WOMAN

I'm looking for a book on motorcycle mechanics.

SARAH

Try the far wall. Next to the automotive manuals.

CUT TO:

INT BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL DAY

Inside a high school biology class. Students mill about.

MOVING IN... on RACHAEL MATHEWS, 17, with pale blue eyes, auburn hair and a sleek anatomy that only occurs in that four year window of opportunity when a female can have a developed body with zero cellulite.

Rachael is looking at her homework with MR ALDEN, her biology teacher. He's a boisterous, high blood pressure guy.

MR. ALDEN

It's just not possible, Rachael. There's a mistake somewhere.

RACHAEL

My Mom's got stacks of Dad's medical records. His blood type was listed dozens of times!

MR. ALDEN

Then your Mother's type is wrong.

RACHAEL

No.

MR. ALDEN

Something's not right. You know as well as I do AB is uncommon. But it genetically comes from somewhere. You weren't the immaculate conception.

RACHAEL

But what does it mean? How could
it happen?

Alden realizes the implications of what he has said.

MR. ALDEN

Forget the assignment. I'd rather
you stuck to your senior project.

RACHAEL

But I like doing the assignments...

MR. ALDEN

(low)

Rachael, I've taught for 12 years.
You're the most gifted student
I've ever had. Forget this stuff.

The bell rings. Students slide into their seats.
Rachael looks at Mr. Alden. He won't meet her gaze.
She picks up her notebooks and walks out the door.

INT HALLWAY SAME

JOSH SUNBERG, rake thin with brainy wireglasses and
not even the first hint of facial hair, is hurrying to
class. The only thing that breaks his classic nerd
mold is a single gold stud earring.

Josh almost collides with Rachael.

JOSH

Rach, are you alright?

Rachael doesn't answer.

HOLD ON JOSH...watching as Rachael runs away.

INT BOOKWORM SAME

A dozen people mill about. Sarah is with a customer as
Rachael charges into the store.

RACHAEL

Mom!

SARAH

Why aren't you in school?

RACHAEL

You had an affair! Dad was sick
and you slept with someone!

Sarah looks like she was hit in the face. The customer stares. This is definitely more interesting than a vegetarian cookbook.

SARAH

What in God's name are you talking about?!

RACHAEL

(shouting)

I'm talking about ME! I'm talking about my blood not matching!

Customers move down the aisles to get a better view.

RACHAEL (con't)

(starting to cry)

You're A! Dad was O positive! I'm AB negative! It's not genetically possible...Dad wasn't my Dad!

OFF SARAH, numb, staring at her daughter....

CUT TO:

INT COFFEE SHOP DAY

Rachael and Sarah are at a booth by the window, untouched drinks in front of them.

SARAH

...I never told you about the artificial insemination because there didn't seem any point. Charlie was gone. The cancer didn't just destroy him. It took part of me, too. I was all alone. I wanted a child.

Sarah stares out the window into some undefinable distance.

SARAH (con't)

I went to a sperm bank. It was very new then. And considered very experimental. Even unethical. I...I was afraid. I didn't want another man to love. I loved one man more than I could ever love another. I wanted a baby.

RACHAEL

But why didn't you tell me? Why did you spend seventeen years telling me about Charlie?! Telling me--telling the world--he was my father?!

SARAH

Because he should have been....

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT WEST BERKELEY SAME

A mid-sized stucco house in a middle class neighborhood.

INT KITCHEN SAME

Rachael is at the kitchen table with Josh, the guy from school. She now looks exhilarated.

RACHAEL

For seventeen years I thought he was dead! But it's not true. I have a father!

JOSH

You sure you want one? They can be real assholes.

Rachael spots a phone book on the kitchen counter. She opens the yellow pages.

JOSH (con't)

What are you doing?

Rachael flips the pages...

RACHAEL
(reading)

Artificial Breasts...see prosthetic
devices. Artificial Eyes. Artificial
Flowers. Artificial Limbs...

JOSH

You don't look in the yellow
pages under artificial insemination
and find your father.

Rachael flips to another section.

RACHAEL

You're right. You look under "S".
Sperm Banks. And there's only one.
Bay Area Cryobank....

CUT TO:

EXT BAY AREA CRYOBANK LATE AFTERNOON

Rachael and Josh are in front of a non-descript office
building.

RACHAEL

Let's go inside...

JOSH

Why?

Rachael takes his arm, pulls him inside.

INT BAY AREA CRYOBANK SAME

Rachael and Josh enter. A WOMAN sits behind an
information desk.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

JOSH

We're just looking at the building.
For an urban planning class.
(low to Rachael)
Now you've seen it. Can we go?

Rachael watches as a young MAN enters. He signs in
with the woman. She presses a button under her desk
and a door across the room BUZZES open. He heads off.

RACHAEL
Was he a sperm donor?

The Receptionist nods.

RACHAEL
You know my friend here is
interested in donating...

Rachael pushes Josh forward. He nearly falls over.

RECEPTIONIST
(routine)
The only requirement for application
is that you be at least eighteen
years old.

RACHAEL
His eighteenth birthday was last
month.

The Receptionist presses the buzzer.

RECEPTIONIST
(to Josh)
The Nurse will help you inside.

Josh's head is still reeling as Rachael takes him by
the arm, steers him through the door into...

INT CYROBANK SAME

It looks like any doctor's office except instead of
Newsweek magazine, *FERTILITY* and *MODERN PARENT* are
on the coffee table.

Rachael enters with Josh.

JOSH
What are you doing?!

A NURSE is seated behind a glass partition. Rachael
eases Josh down into a chair.

RACHAEL
I'm just getting a closer look.
Wait here.

She goes to the Nurse, her eyes scanning the room. The Nurse opens her glass partition.

RACHAEL

(low)

My friend is interested in donating.
He's a little shy.

NURSE

For today he needs to fill out
these forms and leave sperm and
blood samples.

She hands Rachael the application

NURSE (con't)

Only 15 percent of the applicants
end up becoming donors--if he
qualifies he'll be paid forty
dollars per donation, with no more
than three deposits allowed per week.

Rachael returns to Josh.

JOSH

Rach, I couldn't ask Lily Ledbetter
to be my lab partner. I don't
think I'm capable of jerking off
in a stranger's plastic cup!

RACHAEL

What's the big deal? It's not like
you've never done it before.

JOSH

(blushing)

That's my business.

RACHAEL

If I could do it myself I'd never
ask you.

JOSH

Forget it.

RACHAEL

Who pierced your ear?

JOSH

It took you three days! A jury would have called it torture.

RACHAEL

Who believed in your astro-physics project when everyone else on the planet told you it would fail?!

JOSH

It did fail.

RACHAEL

That's not the point!

Josh drops his head into his hands.

JOSH

If I was normal I'd have a best-friend named Biff. We'd be bowling right now.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON THE NURSE....her features look exaggerated as if she's speaking in slow motion.

NURSE

We're ready to take your samples.

ON RACHAEL AND JOSH....Josh is hyperventilating. Rachael pushes him through the open door.

NURSE (con't)

Three of our rooms have magazines and one has a video tape set-up. Which would you prefer?

JOSH

(in a gasp of air)

The video tapes please.

He looks back panicked at Rachael as an elder man in a lab coat passes. His name tag reads DR. STEMOPOLIS. Rachael steps through the door toward him.

RACHAEL

Doctor...

DR. STEMOPOLIS

Yes?

RACHAEL

I've come to see my medical records...

CUT TO:

INT DR. STEMOPOLIS OFFICE DAY

Rachael is in a chair. Across the desk is the Doctor. He looks uneasy.

DR. STEMOPOLIS

It will take some time to locate the file. Anything over ten years ago isn't on the computer.

OFF STEMOPOLIS STARING AT HER...

CUT TO:

INT COLLECTION ROOM SAME

A sterile room with a sink and a TV with VCR. Josh stands in the center holding his plastic cup.

RECEPTIONIST

We pay by volume. Today any amount will do but in the future you need to reach the top line to receive the full forty dollars.

She shuts the door. Sweat runs in rivelets down Josh's face.

JOSH

(to himself)

How'd I get myself into this?
If I don't do it they'll think something's wrong with me...

He turns on the VCR. The title "The Bad News Beavers" flashes. On the soundtrack...M.C. Hammer's "U Can't Touch This". A woman with huge breasts comes into frame wearing only a baseball cap. Josh looks interested.

CUT TO:

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE SAME

Dr. Stemopolis closes a medical notebook.

DR. STEMOPOLIS
It's impossible to determine the
identity of the donor. The records
don't exist.

Rachael's eyes fill with tears. The Doctor softens.

DR. STEMOPOLIS (con't)
Most of our donors then and now
come from the University. We
get a lot of students from the
sciences. That's as much as you'd
ever be able to determine.

The silence is broken by a knock on the door. The
Nurse sticks her head in.

NURSE
Dr. Singer would like to see you.

DR. STEMOPOLIS
I'll be right there.
(to Rachael)
I'm sorry, I don't have anymore
time.

He gets to his feet. Holds the door open for Rachael.
She starts to cry.

RACHAEL
May I...use the phone...before I go?

DR. STEMOPOLIS
Shirley, could you get her an
outside line?

The Doctor gives Rachael one last uneasy look, exits.
Rachael starts to get up, sinks back into her chair.

RACHAEL
(through her tears)
I'm not feeling very well. I'm a
...diabetic. Maybe a glass of
soda would help.

The Nurse nods. Exits immediately down the hall.
Rachael grabs the notebook on the doctor's desk and is
out the door. Victory.

INT COLLECTION ROOM SAME

ON JOSH...with a smile on his face. Hear M.C. Hammer's "U Can't Touch This" even louder. Victory.

INT HALLWAY SAME

ON RACHAEL...she moves down the hallway at top speed. A door opens and Josh emerges, his sperm cup full. He COLLIDES with Rachael and the cup flies out of his hand...

just as Dr. Stemopolis steps into the hall. The cup HITS him in the face. Josh and the Nurse both gasp in horror.

Rachael just keeps on going.

INT LOBBY SAME

Rachael breezes through past the receptionist.

INT SPERM BANK SAME

Josh and the Nurse both try to wipe the sperm off the splattered Doctor.

EXT STREET AFTERNOON

Rachael emerges onto the street, runs down the sidewalk.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE DUSK

Establishing. A small California craftsman. Lots of overgrown plants and flowers.

INT UPSTAIRS HALLWAY SAME

Sarah comes down the hallway, a large BIRD swoops down from the rafters, lands on her shoulder. Sarah tries to shoo him away.

SARAH

Get back in your cage!

(shouting)

I'm home...

RACHAEL(O.S.)

I'm in here. Doing my homework.

Sarah steps over two overfed dogs. Tries to open Rachael's door. It's locked. Sarah shrugs. Teenagers.

INT SARAH'S ROOM SAME

Sarah enters, turns on the TV.

ON THE TELEVISION....a cheaply made commercial, shot in video, shows a CLOSE-UP of

HAL JACKSON.

Hal's in his forties, wears an oversized cowboy hat and has his arm slung around a LLAMA. Behind him are rows of Chevy trucks.

HAL (ON THE TV SCREEN)

So come on down to Hal Jackson's Chevy dealership. Because eggs are cheaper in the country--and so are Chevy trucks!!!!

Hal looks as sincere as possible considering the fact that the llama is spitting in his ear. Loud obnoxious music swells.

Sarah gets in a yoga position, staring all the while at the TV screen. Rachael enters, makes a face.

RACHAEL

How can you watch that junk?

SARAH

First you lock me out of your room. Now you're going to censor my television. Should I submit a dinner plan for your approval?

Rachael turns back to her room.

RACHAEL

I'm not hungry.

SARAH

(calling after her)

I was talking about my dinner, not yours.

(softening)

I thought we could go out.

RACHAEL (O.S.)

Not tonight. I have too much to do.

SARAH

(to herself, talking both sides of a conversation)

"Hello, Mom. How was your day?"

"Fine." "Are you still upset about the knowledge that you're a product of artificial insemination?" "No, I've put that behind me." "Good, but it's all I've thought about today. Maybe we should go out to eat and discuss it more." "I'd love that Mom."....

ON THE TV SCREEN...Hal Jackson is now riding an ostrich through his car dealership.

INT RACHAEL'S SAME

Rachael returns to her room, locks the door. She pulls back the blankets on her bed to reveal: the Cryobank notebook.

ON THE FILES...labeled SARAH MATHEWS. Speciman #43588C sent February 18, 1973 to Dr. Max Weinberger.

Rachael turns the page...

SPECIMAN 43588C Donor: Halbert Jackson. Caucasian. Date of Birth 8/7/45. Soc. Sec. #540-82-9789....Blood type: B negative. Count 50 million per cc. Motility: +73 %. Morphology 78 % normal. Hair color: brown. Hair texture: Medium. Height: 5'11. Weight: 160 Eye color: blue....

Rachael stares at the information, lifts the telephone and dials.

RACHAEL

(low into the receiver)

Josh? Don't be mad at me...I got great news.

OFF RACHAEL...staring at the information.

CUT TO:

INT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES DAY

It's a modern day Ellis Island. Lines of people everywhere waiting for slips of paper.

AT AN INFORMAITON WINDOW...is Rachael. A rasta CIVIL - SERVANT is across from her, a computer at his side.

RACHAEL

The accident was my fault. I was so shook up I took down the wrong telephone number.

CLERK

You got his license number?

RACHAEL

No. Just his name. And his social security number.

The Clerk nods. No problem.

CLERK

There's a ten dollar fee.

EXT BERKELEY DMV DAY

Rachael comes out holding a piece of paper like it were the holy grail. Josh is waiting on a bench, a biology book in his lap. Rachael throws her arms around him.

RACHAEL

You were right!! They gave it to me!

She thrusts the paper at him, Josh looks.

JOSH

He lives in the Berkeley?

RACHAEL

Probably twenty minutes from my house! My whole life my father was within walking distance!

JOSH

Unfuckingbelievable.

RACHAEL

I wonder what he does. What he looks like. I bet he's in the sciences. Maybe a professor or a doctor.

JOSH

Maybe a proctologist.
(he looks down at his watch)
You know we can still make it to fifth period.

RACHAEL

(shocked)

I'm not going back to school.

JOSH

We have a trigonometry test.

RACHAEL

Take it for both of us. I'm going to check out my father....

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM DAY

HEAR...thick, labored snoring. Moving past an empty blender and two encrusted drink glasses to the

BED...

where a MAN with longish brown hair is visible hording a tangle of sheets and blankets. Moving past the sleeping lump to find a WOMAN. She clutches the only scrap of sheet the man doesn't have.

The woman rolls onto her side. STACY....25...we see her face, pixish, no character, terminally bored. She looks at the snoring man, sighs.

INT BATHROOM SAME

The woman splashes water on her face.

INT BEDROOM SAME

The woman heads toward the bed, now in a spandex dance outfit. She goes to the man, pokes him with her shoe.

WOMAN

I'm going.

The snoring stops. A hand rises up and waves. The snoring continues. The woman turns on her heels and heads to the door. She stops. Turns back. Gives him a kiss on the forehead.

WOMAN

I'll be home late.

Seconds later we hear the front door slam shut. The snoring abruptly STOPS.

ON THE BED...Hal Jackson shakes off his blankets and squints at the nightstand clock.

Hal is in his forties. He has several days worth of beard stubble, a hangover, and could consider a haircut. Despite it all he still looks great.

HAL

Shit....

He finds a cigarette, lights it as he plugs his phone back into the wall, dials.

HAL

(into the receiver)

Hey....it's Hal. What's up?

(they tell him)

Today? Ah-for-chrissakes. I'll be there in twenty.

He hangs up the phone, starts quickly for the bathroom.

CUT TO:

EXT HAL JACKSON'S HOUSE DAY

Rachael coasts to a stop on her scooter. She stares at

the house. It's large and nondescript. Perched in the Berkeley hills, the vast bay is spread out below.

Rachael parks as the automatic garage door rolls open.

INT HAL'S GARAGE DAY

Hal is behind the wheel of a souped up Chevy truck. He starts the engine, puts it in reverse, looks into the rearview mirror....

there's a YOUNG WOMAN standing six feet behind the truck.

ON HAL... absorbing her image.

HAL
(to himself)
Very young. But very cute.

He rolls down his window, calls out:

HAL
Do you need something?

Rachael steps out from behind the truck, walks slowly to Hal. She stares at him in the side mirror...

ON RACHAEL...the connection. Her father. She opens her mouth. Nothing comes out.

HAL
Are you alright?

RACHAEL
(stammering)
I'm sorry...I'm looking for...
Halbert Jackson.

HAL
The one and only.

RACHAEL
(having trouble forming a sentence)
I need to talk to you.

Hal glances at his watch. At Rachael's legs. Jumps out of the truck.

HAL

I'm late. Wanna go for a ride?

Hal throws open the passenger door, motions for Rachael to go around as he lifts her scooter into the back of the truck.

RACHAEL

I...I...

Rachael peers inside the truck...

ON THE SEAT...is a pack of cigarettes, an oversized cowboy hat and a pair of handcuffs.

Rachael stares. Hal climbs back inside, pats the upholstery.

HAL

Make up your mind. Coming or going? I gotta get to work.

Rachael climbs inside in a daze. Hal throws the truck into reverse, rips down the driveway. Rachael fishes for a seatbelt.

RACHAEL

Where...do you...work?

HAL

Hal Jackson's Chevy dealership....

He puts on his cowboy hat, steps on the gas.

HAL (con't)

(affecting the way he sounds in the commercials)
Because eggs are cheaper in the
country, and so are Chevy trucks.

ON RACHAEL...oh my God. No wonder he looks familiar. The jerk from all the TV commercials. Rachael swallows, grips the dashboard.

RACHAEL

I had no idea Chevy trucks were
so fast....

Hal winks.

HAL

It's not factory. Engine's worth twice the body. This baby's been bored, stroked and she's full blown. I'd drive an Italian sportscar but it'd be bad for business. Appearances and all.

ON RACHAEL...staring at him. He winks again, lights another cigarette, makes a wide turn, catches part of the curb. Rachael is thrown against the door.

HAL

No one builds 'em like Chevy trucks. So...tell me about yourself. You're a fan?

Rachael's horrified.

HAL (con't)

Don't be embarrassed. I'll autograph an 8 by 10 glossy for you at the office. What did you say your name was?

RACHAEL

Rachael...Mathews.

HAL

You look familiar. Are you the girl Barney's been telling me about?

RACHAEL

I'm sure no one's told you about me....

EXT BERKELEY SAME

ON THE TRUCK...merging recklessly into freeway traffic.

INT TRUCK SAME

HAL

Hey, a first. Legal use of the carpool lane.

Hal floors it, slams a cassette into the tape deck. The soundtrack of *Phantom of the Opera*. He sings with the tape.

HAL (con't)

*Open up your eyes, let your fantasies
unwind...you alone can make my soul
ignite...you who are the music of the
night!!!!*

ON RACHAEL...her face glistens with sweat. She covers her mouth.

RACHAEL

I think I'm getting carsick.

CUT TO:

EXT HAL JACKSON'S CHEVY DEALERSHIP

Hal pulls into the dealership. There's a small video CAMERA CREW milling about. A huge BEAR is in a cage next to them. Rachael opens the door and vomits onto the asphalt. Hal hardly notices.

HAL

I gotta calm down the troops.

Hal climbs out of the truck. The video tape DIRECTOR stares at his wristwatch, heads after him.

DIRECTOR

We've been waiting for two hours!
In thirty five minutes we're
outta here!

Hal waves. Rachael manages to lift her head up in time to see Hal stride into the dealership.

INT HAL JACKSON CHEVY SAME

A very LARGE WOMAN in her sixties approaches carrying a stack of contracts. ALBERTA. She's tough.

ALBERTA

We got twenty trucks coming in at four. The camera crew's outside waiting to shoot. And somebody broke into the service department last night and stole four carburators.

HAL
(totally unphased)
Anything else?

ALBERTA
Laura's getting take-out lunch.
What do you want?

HAL
Three packs of marlboros.

ALBERTA
Got it.

Alberta disappears into an office. Hal continues toward his, passing a dozen salespeople. He gives them all thumbs up.

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

Hal enters a large office. He picks up a hanger with a WHITE BUCKSKIN COWBOY OUTFIT and disappears into his PRIVATE BATHROOM.

INT BATHROOM SAME

Hal puts on the cowboy outfit. Struggles to button the waist. He sucks in his stomach, moans as he gets some of the sleeve's beaded fringe caught in the zipper track.

HAL
Shit!!!!

He catches sight of himself in the mirror. His hair is a mess. He's still unshaven. And his left hand is stuck in his fly.

HAL
Today sucks. No question.

Hal resumes the struggle with the zipper and the fringe as he kicks the bathroom door open...

and comes FACE TO FACE with Rachael. She's pale, her eyes glisten.

RACHAEL

I need to talk to you....

HAL

It's a bad time. You think you could help with this?

He motions with his free hand toward the zipper. Alberta sticks her head in the door, raises her eyebrows. What's he up to now?

ALBERTA

You got Detroit on line four.

HAL

I'll call back.

He tugs hard on the zipper. The fringe rips. His hand snaps free. The beaded leather strips dangle captive from the zipper teeth.

HAL

Listen, Ramona, you're very cute. But right now I got a commercial to shoot. You follow my drift?

RACHAEL

It's Rachael.

HAL

I like that better. Let's keep in touch.

RACHAEL

But I have to talk to you. It's important!

Hal moves past her, starts for the door.

RACHAEL (con't)

Will you listen to me!

He's going to get away. She shouts.

RACHAEL

You're my father!!!!

Hal stops, slowly turns around. Looks at her.

HAL

I'm...what ?

RACHAEL

My father.

TIME CUT:

HAL'S OFFICE DAY

Rachael is seated. So is Hal. He's behind his desk, still in his buckskin outfit, stone faced. He has a cigarette in his hand, a second one burns in an ashtray. He clears his throat.

HAL

Okay, I did donate sperm years ago. A quick way to make a few bucks. It was my understanding it was anonymous. Otherwise I sure the hell wouldn't have done it!

RACHAEL

It was anonymous. I stole the records. But don't you think a person has the right to know who her parents are?

Hal jumps to his feet.

HAL

No! Under the circumstances I think I have a right to my privacy.

Silence. Hal paces. Rachael stares at the shag carpeting.

HAL (con't)

Besides, you've got no proof. A stolen medical file doesn't add up to a hill a beans in my book!

RACHAEL

We could take tests and find out....

HAL

Okay, let's suppose I am your...
suppose we knew I was...
(he can still hardly say it)
the contributing party....

He finally looks her in the eye.

HAL (con't)

Why are you telling me? Do need
a spare kidney? Or some bone marrow?
I mean, for chrissakes, it was
conception in a petrie dish! You
seem adjusted. Like a good kid.
I got nothing to offer you. Maybe
a deal on a truck or an extended
warranty and financing...but
otherwise....I'm sorry....

He goes to the door, holds it open. Stands in
silence.

ON RACHAEL...her face is flushed. He wants nothing
to do with her. She reaches to the floor, lifts her
backpack in a daze, and in one motion is up and out of
the office.

OFF HAL...watching her go. He stubs his cigarette out
in an ashtray, looks down at his hand. It's shaking.

CUT TO:

EXT CAR DEALERSHIP DAY

Rachael runs down the rows of new Chevy trucks. Her
scooter is parked next to Hal's truck. She climbs on,
out of breath, and speeds off into the distance.

EXT RACHAEL AND SARAH'S LATE AFTERNOON

Rachael pulls up the driveway on her scooter. She
looks exhausted.

INT RACHAEL AND SARAH'S SAME

Rachael climbs the stairs. Her eyes are red and
puffy, her nose runny. She walks down the hall, goes
into the BATHROOM, turns on the taps in the tub.

Water pours into the old porcelain. Rachael dumps in
bubble bath. She takes off her shoes. Stares at the

water. As the tub fills she exits to

her MOTHER'S ROOM. Rachael rummages through her tapes. Finds what she wants. Sticks it in the tapedeck.

HEAR...Billie Holiday. "God Bless the Child Who's Got His Own". She turns up the volume.

INT BATHROOM SAME

Rachael enters. The tub's nearly full. She turns it off. Stares at all the foamy bubbles. Climbs in, all her CLOTHES STILL ON.

CUT TO:

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE DUSK

Sarah coasts down the driveway on her bike. She's singing "Play that Funky Music White Girl".

INT HOUSE SAME

Sarah enters. There are lit candles on the table. It's set for two. Holiday china. Flowers from the garden.

Sarah stares, proceeds into the KITCHEN. Rachael is cooking.

SARAH

What got into you?

RACHAEL

Nothing.

Sarah has a revelation, jumps up onto the counter.

SARAH

Did one of your snakes get loose?!

RACHAEL

No. Shit, Mom. I just wanted to make you a nice dinner.

Sarah doesn't buy it, goes to the refrigerator, pops a can of beer.

SARAH

Nothing special going on?

RACHAEL

I wanted...to make sure you knew...
even though we fight about things...
I think you're a good mom.

Sarah looks at Rachael. This is major.

SARAH

For godsakes what happened?!

RACHAEL

(her voice cracking)
I found my real father. And he's a
mean prick....

SARAH

You what?!

RACHAEL

He's that gross car salesman--the
one who's in all the commercials
with the animals. Hal Jackson!

Sarah grabs onto the counter, looks like she might
fall over.

SARAH

(in shock)

How do you know he was your father?!
How could you know such a thing?!!

RACHAEL

I got the name from the sperm bank.
I took my file. And I knew it in my
gut when I saw him. My father....

Tears roll down her cheeks.

RACHAEL

Mom, it was so awful....

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S HOUSE LATE NIGHT

It's dark. The only illumination is the bluish cast
of the moon and the orange glow of the end of Hal's
cigarette.

MOVING PAST...the livingroom furniture. There's not much of it to Hal. He's sitting in a chair. Unmoving. A bottle of scotch is at his side.

The front door opens and Stacy comes in. She still has on workout clothes. She quietly starts across the livingroom, sees Hal, is startled.

STACY

You scared me.

She turns on a light.

STACY

Why are you sitting in the dark?

HAL

Saving energy. How were classes?

STACY

Okay. How was your day?

ON HAL...for a second he considers telling her. But she's not even looking at him now. She's unlacing her pump-em up Reeboks on her way to the bedroom.

HAL

Same old bullshit.

CUT TO:

INT SARAH'S ROOM NIGHT

Sarah is in her bed. Her nightside light is on. She stares at the pictures on her bureau. PHOTOS of Rachael as a child are next to a PHOTO of a handsome young man.

Sarah gets up, takes the picture of the man, brings it back to bed with her. She sets the photo on the pillow, looks at it.

Finally she opens a bedside drawer, places the photo inside and turns out the light.

CUT TO:

INT BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL DAY

The harsh light of day. Inside Mr. Alden's biology class. Josh and Rachael are at a microscope, a starfish is cut up in front of them.

JOSH

He really said he could get you
a deal on a truck?

RACHAEL

(bitter)

Yeah, amazing, huh.

JOSH

Rach, do you think he meant that?
I mean, there's a big difference
between factory sticker and what
they charge.

RACHAEL

What are you saying?!

Josh fidgets.

JOSH

Ah...well...you know my parents
said they'd get me a car for
graduation....I was thinking...

RACHAEL

Josh, this guy's the biggest
jerk I've ever met! I don't care
if I am related to him!

Josh backpeddles.

JOSH

I'd like to just look at him. Not
get a truck or anything.

RACHAEL

Turn on the TV anytime after ten.
To a cable channel. You can't miss
him!

JOSH

Does he wear that cowboy hat when
he's not on TV?

RACHAEL

No.

JOSH

See. It's not the same thing. We could drive out there. Instead of going to 4th period. You haven't stop talking about him for two hours. There must be something interesting about him.

CUT TO:

INT BOOKWORM BOOKSTORE DAY

Sarah is behind the counter listening to an old Procal Harem tape. She opens the yellow pages to Automotive.

ON THE YELLOW PAGES...as Sarah flips through the section to find Hal Jackson's Chevy dealer. There's a cartoon character of Hal being chased by a lion.

ON SARAH...as she goes to the window, flips the sign to CLOSED, goes outside, locks the door.

As Sarah gets on her bike we see several people inside the shop POUNDING to get out. She'd locked them in.

CUT TO:

EXT HAL JACKSON'S CHEVY DEALERSHIP

Hal pulls into the parking lot in his souped up truck. He looks exhausted.

INT CHEVY DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal enters, heads to his office.

INT OFFICE SAME

Hal takes a seat, lights a cigarette as Alberta comes through the door. She hands him a stack of messages.

ALBERTA

Austin called. He'll be at the bank till eleven.

HAL

You deal with it.

ALBERTA

(surprised)

Okay.

He tosses the messages, not even bothering to look at

them.

HAL
Nobody named Rachael...

ALBERTA
Nobody named Rachael.

Alberta turns to go. Stops, looks back at Hal.

ALBERTA
You okay?

HAL
Never felt better.

ALBERTA
You never looked worse.

Hal calls after her.

HAL
Tell Lee I'll be out on the floor
in five.

EXT CHEVY DEALERSHIP SAME

Rachael's moped pulls to the curb. Josh is on the back wearing the one helmet. They both stare at the dealership.

JOSH
(impressed)
It's big....

RACHAEL
Yeah.

JOSH
He can't be stupid.

RACHAEL
(indignant)
I didn't say he was stupid. I
said he was vulgar car dealer.

JOSH

Must be a smart vulgar car dealer.
Or you wouldn't be in the honors
program.

RACHAEL

I get that from my mother.

JOSH

You got something from him. He
gave 23 of the 46 chromosomes.

RACHAEL

Don't rub it in.

JOSH

Let's look at some of the trucks.

RACHAEL

No way.

JOSH

He's not going to see you. He's
probably inside chasing a secretary.

CUT TO:

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

The other side of the dealership. Sarah rides up on
her bicycle. She stares at the trucks, the enormous
Hal Jackson sign. The oversized American flag. It's
a lot to take in.

INT DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal steps out of his office onto the showroom floor,
heads toward his salespeople.

HAL

How many trucks sold this
morning?

A few grumbles. No solid answers. Lots of eyes slide
to the floor.

HAL

The first rule of sales...enthusiasm.
You all don't look very enthusiastic.

A hyper man in a new suit clears his throat. JOSE.

JOSE
Toyota cut prices.

Hal is surprised. Doesn't show it.

HAL
How much?

JOSE
Five percent across the board.

HAL
We got 'em running scared. That makes me feel great.

JOSE
It didn't make us feel great.

HAL
Because you're thinking in narrow terms. Open the mind. See the big picture. They had to lower prices. We've got a better product. All you need is conviction of belief. I'll bet a hundred dollars I can nail the next person to walk in the door.

The group visibly brightens. Action. A cynical looking WOMAN in glasses puts down her coffee cup.
LEE.

LEE
I'm in.

Several others nod. Hal smiles.

HAL
Okay then. Contract signature from the first person to step inside--

JOSE
(interrupting)
If not, forget the hundred and lower prices.

Hal considers. All eyes are on him.

HAL

Okay, but if I win, we stay open till midnight next week for a Moonlight Madness promo.

Groans. Everyone hates Moonlight Madness. Now they all have a vested interest.

LEE

Deal.

They stare at the door. Hal lights a cigarette, inhales, waits....as SARAH enters.

JOSE

(disappointed)

A woman.

Hal's lips curl up in a smile.

HAL

Double or nothing? Two weeks of Moonlight Madness for ten percent.

The group fidgets.

LEE

You got it.

Hal stubs out his cigarette, heads across the showroom to Sarah. He absorbs her image...her hair is wind blown, her earrings don't match. She doesn't look happy. A tough cookie. He extends his hand.

HAL

Hal Jackson...welcome to the biggest selection of the finest built trucks you can find west of Detroit.

Sarah doesn't take his hand. Her eyes narrow.

SARAH

I have no interest whatsoever in buying a vehicle of any kind.

HAL
 (automatic)
 Well then you've come to the right
 place....

SARAH
 I had no intention of coming here.
 In fact, it's the last place on
 earth I want to be!

ON HAL...staring at the woman. And then back at his
 sales force. Is this a set-up? Is the woman crazy?

HAL
 (slowly)
 I see....is it trucks you have a
 problem with or just chevrolets?

SARAH
 The only problem I have is with
 you!

Lee passes, gets an earfull, smiles.

HAL
 Are you the woman who called from
 the Animal Rights group?

SARAH
 I'm Rachael Mathews' mother.

ON HAL...as this sinks in. He swallows, tries to
 collect his thoughts. It's like someone hit him.
 CUT TO:

EXT LOT SAME

Rachael and Josh are on the outer edges of the
 dealership. Josh is staring at a truck, Rachael is
 staring at the office.

RACHAEL
 Josh, let's get out of here.

JOSH
 Do you like the black interior
 or the tan one?

CUT TO:

INT DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal escorts Sarah into his office, closes the door.

INT OFFICE SAME

SARAH

(her eyes flash with anger)
Would it have been so difficult
to be nice to her?!

HAL

I was caught off guard....

SARAH

A kid comes to you, totally
vulnerable, and you tell her to
come back if she wants a kidney!
For Godsakes where do you
come off?!!!

HAL

Give me a break. I donate a cup
of sperm eighteen years ago and
today some kid wants to call me
Daddy!

SARAH

We have no proof you're the father!
And that's why I've come. Stay
away from her! We don't need you
in our lives.

HAL

Listen lady, she came to me! I
don't want any part of your life!
And two seconds ago you were mad
I wasn't nice to her--Get your
story straight!

CUT TO:

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

Rachael has moved closer to the showroom, is straining
to get a better look.

RACHAEL

Doesn't that look like my mother's
bicycle?

Josh is mesmerized under the hood of a truck.

JOSH

Looks more like a V6 engine to me.

Rachael starts for the bicycle.

RACHAEL

It's got a big basket...

(horrified)

oh God...and a peace symbol on
the seat....

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

SARAH

Being a single parent isn't easy.
I did the best I could!

HAL

I'm sure you did!

INT SHOWROOM SAME

Rachael enters, heads for Hal's office. Jose
approaches.

JOSE

Can I help you today with a new
car or truck?

RACHAEL

No!

ON THE SALES FORCE....

LEE

Two for two.

Rachael heads to Hal's office. She sees the outline
of her mother behind the levolor blinds. She opens
the door.

INT HAL'S SAME

Hal and Sarah stop shouting and stand frozen like deer
in car headlights.

SARAH

Rachael...

RACHAEL

What are you doing here?!

HAL

Good question.

SARAH

What are you doing here?!

A stand-off. Hal fumbles for his marlboros.

HAL

Anyone mind if I have a cigarette?

SARAH

Yes.

RACHAEL

Mother, it's his office.

SARAH

And they're my lungs. You know the data on second hand smoke.

Hal moves behind his desk. Opens a file cabinet, takes out a bottle of single malt scotch.

HAL

How bout a drink? Anybody got a problem with that?

SARAH

Make it two.

Hal pours two coffee cups of Glenlivet, hands one to Sarah. She downs it. Rachael is shocked.

RACHAEL

Mother!

SARAH

Please.

RACHAEL

(to Hal)

She almost never drinks hard liquor.

HAL

What a shame.

SARAH

I feel much better.

Hal re-fills their cups.

SARAH

(turning to Rachael)

You seem to have a problem keeping yourself in school these days.

RACHAEL

I...I...

HAL

A good education is invaluable.

ON HAL...he can't believe he said that. It sounded so paternal. He takes another drink.

SARAH

(to Hal)

She knows that. She's going to Berkeley next fall.

RACHAEL

(to Hal)

I'm applying to other places besides Berkeley. My first choice is M.I.T.

SARAH

(to Hal)

She doesn't really want to go all the way to Boston.

RACHAEL

(to Hal)

Yes I do want to really go all the way to Boston.

SARAH

(to Hal)

We could never afford that kind of tuition anyway.

RACHAEL

(to Hal)

My high school science teacher wants me to apply for a national merit scholarship.

SARAH

(to Hal)

She's always winning those kinds of things.

RACHAEL

Mother!

SARAH

(with a shrug)

Well it's true.

RACHAEL

Two seconds ago you didn't want me to go to Boston. Now I'm winning all kinds of awards!

SARAH

I still don't want you to go there. You can use all the awards you'll win at Berkeley.

Hal watches in amazement, re-fills the coffee cups again with scotch.

CUT TO:

INT SHOWROOM SAME

Josh tentatively enters the dealership, looks around for Rachael or Sarah. No where in sight.

ON THE SALES FORCE....watching Hal's office. They turn and see Josh.

LEE

(to the group)

Who wants pinkie?

Nobody.

JOSE

Do we think he's old enough to drive?

ON RACHAEL....this is excruciating. She gets to her feet, tugs on her mother.

RACHAEL

Mom, we should be going.

SARAH

Right. We've settled our business.

RACHAEL

Whatever it was.

Sarah gets to her feet, is unsteady. Sits back down. Looks over at Hal. She feels like she's swimming. Rachael pulls her mother back to her feet.

RACHAEL

Let's go.

Sarah starts for the door. Hal goes to their side.

HAL

Where did you park?

SARAH

On the sidewalk.

HAL

(appreciative)

I do that too.

RACHAEL

She rode her bicycle.

HAL

Oh.

They pass Alberta's office. Hal pokes his head inside.

HAL

Tell Lee we're lowering prices
ten percent across the board.
Order new ad art.

ON ALBERTA...Why does he look so enthused about slashing prices?

An attractive woman gets to her feet. JEAN.

JEAN

Maybe his parents have money.

Jean strides across the showroom to Josh. He straightens his glasses, tries hard to affect sophistication.

JEAN (con't)

Can I interest you in a look at some of our new model chevroleets?

JOSH

Sure....

Josh eyes an American Express Card display.

JOSH (con't)

While I'm here I'll apply for an American Express card. They keep pestering me to join.

JEAN

(low)

A word of advise...don't bullshit a bullshiter. It's too tough.

JOSH

Gotcha.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

Hal is seated behind his desk. Rachael and Sarah are on the couch. Sarah's cheeks are flushed. The scotch went right to her.

Sarah regards Hal. He's staring at her. She unconsciously pulls her hair back, crosses her legs, looks away. Her eyes go back to him. They connect again. More silence. No question. They're intrigued by each other.

HAL

So....

SARAH

So....

ALBERTA

Okay....

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal, Sarah and Rachael step outside as Josh whizzes past behind the wheel of a new truck. Jean is in the passenger seat. He grins, waves.

SARAH

Was that Josh?

RACHAEL

(even more confused)

Yes.

They keep walking. Hal stares at Sarah. She's wobbly on her feet.

HAL

Why don't I put your bike in my truck and drive you back into town...

SARAH

I'm fine.

Sarah reaches her bike, manages to get on.

SARAH (con't)

Are you coming?

RACHAEL

I've got to wait for Josh.

SARAH

You two go straight back to school.

Sarah gives her daughter a kiss, pushes off from the curb, all the while avoiding any eye contact with Hal.

ON HAL AND RACHAEL...as they watch her go. Silence. Finally.

HAL

You caught me by surprise yesterday.
...I apologize if I hurt you.

RACHAEL

Forget it.

More silence.

RACHAEL (con't)

Sorry about my Mom showing up.

HAL

No problem.

Rachael walks in a daze across the lot toward her moped.

ON HAL...as he starts back to the office. Changes his mind, heads for his truck.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET DAY

Hal's truck pulls out of the dealership. He catches up with Sarah, slows to a crawl behind her, motioning with this left arm for cars to go around them.

ON SARAH...glistening in sweat, pumping away on her bike.

HIGH SHOT...looking down on the busy street. The truck is slowly trailing the bicycle.

ON SARAH...finally looking over her shoulder to see Hal. He drives along side her, leans across the passenger side, gives her a firm directive.

HAL

Pull over lady.

She does. Hal parks, strides to her like a police officer.

HAL

You have the right to remain silent. You don't have the right to endanger the general population. Or yourself. Get in.

Hal lifts her bicycle into the back of his truck. Opens the door. Motions for her to get inside. She does.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S CAR SAME

Hal is driving, Sarah is in the passenger seat. He studies her.

HAL

Let me guess...you work in a second hand clothing store.

Sarah pulls up her polka dot socks.

SARAH

I own a bookstore.

HAL

And you live for the printed word. You don't even own a TV set.

SARAH

Wrong again. I was a charter subscriber to the Sports Channel.

ON HAL...still trying to figure her out.

HAL

Okay...so where we headed?

SARAH

It's called the Bookworm, on--

HAL

(interrupting)

On Telegraph. I've been there. For a poetry reading.

SARAH

(impossible)

You've attended our poetry series?

HAL

It wasn't my idea.

SARAH

Who did you hear?

HAL

Some guy with a thick Russian accent.

SARAH
Yevgeny Yevtushenko?

HAL
I dunno. I could barely understand
him. He was a mumbler.

SARAH
He's probably the most prominent
living poet in the Soviet Union!

HAL
Did you sleep with him?

SARAH
Of course not!!!

HAL
Just checking. You sounded so
enthusiastic.

CUT TO:

INT BOOKWORM DAY

Hal's truck pulls to the curb in front of the shop.
He gets out, lifts Sarah's bike. They proceed
together inside.

INT BOOKSTORE SAME

Sarah heads to the back of the store, leaving Hal at
the front counter.

SARAH
UPS leaves my deliveries in
the alley.

He glances up at the bulletin board on the wall.

ON THE BOARD...cluttered with memorabilia. The eye
catcher is an article from the High School paper...
"JUNIOR WINS STATE SCIENCE AWARD".

ON HAL...as he moves behind the counter, reads the
article. It's surrounded by photographs. He takes
down one, stares.

ON THE PHOTO...of Sarah and Rachael standing side by
side at the beach. Their hair is plastered back by

the wind.

ON HAL...as Sarah heads back to the front of the store. He starts to return the photograph to the bulletin board, changes his mind, puts it in his pocket.

ON SARAH...the scotch is wearing off. Her head is pounding. He definitely makes her uncomfortable.

SARAH

I've got to get back to work.

HAL

Me, too.

Sarah goes behind the counter, hits the switch on the tape deck. Maybe loud music will drive him out. It doesn't.

HAL

So you never re-married...

SARAH

No.

She begins rearranging a stack of books. Turns her back to him.

SARAH (con't)

What about you?

HAL

Divorced. Twice. I live with someone right now.

SARAH

Oh.

HAL

No kids. That I know of anyway.

She finally turns around, looks at him.

SARAH

Kids--family--are the reason to live as far as I'm concerned.

HAL

I guess I live to enjoy myself.

She moves to a display. He follows. Finally makes eye contact again.

HAL (con't)

So what do you want to do about all of this?

SARAH

Nothing. Act like we never met. That's my plan. Rachael had an idolized version of a father. She thought he'd be a rocket scientist or a brain surgeon who looked like Bruce Springsteen and had been waiting all his life for her. Thank God she's given that up.

ON HAL...to his surprise he's hurt by her statement.

HAL

I'll say.

He heads for the door. She pretends to be studying an order form.

HAL

Adios.

Sarah finally looks up. But he's out the door and gone.

OFF SARAH...watching as his truck pulls away.

CUT TO:

EXT HAL JACKSON'S DEALERSHIP DAY

Hal gets out of his truck, heads for the showroom. An artist is painting "10 % OFF STICKER SALE" on the windows.

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

Hal sinks into the chair, reaches into his pocket, removes

THE PHOTOGRAPH OF SARAH AND RACHAEL... he stares at it

as Alberta walks in. He covers the photo casually with a stack of papers.

HAL

I'm back.

ALBERTA

I noticed. Call Detroit.

HAL

Alberta, do you think I would have made a good father?

Alberta considers.

ALBERTA

Probably. You never know. It's not too late.
(her eyes narrow, she's got it figured)
You're getting married again. And Stacy wants a kid, right?

HAL

(what difference does it make)
Right.

ALBERTA

Think long and hard. They aren't like golden retrievers. You can't give them away when they pee on the carpet.

She continues out the door. Hal picks up the photo, stares again at the image of Sarah and Rachael.

After a long moment he tosses the photo into the TRASH.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE NIGHT

Sarah and Rachael are at the kitchen table eating dinner in silence. Finally:

RACHAEL

Do you think he's my biological father?

SARAH

I don't know....

RACHAEL

We both just show up like that.
God, he must think we're so weird.

SARAH

I hope so.

RACHAEL

He's pretty good looking. I mean
for an old guy.

SARAH

I didn't notice. He's not an
old guy. He's in his forties.

RACHAEL

You thought he was a jerk, right?

SARAH

I didn't bother to form an opinion.

RACHAEL

I just wish I'd been able to
ask him a few more things.

SARAH

Like what?

RACHAEL

I dunno. Like is there any mental
illness in the immediate family.

SARAH

There is. On my side.

RACHAEL

Thanks mom.

Rachael gets up, takes her plate to the sink. Keeps
her back to her mother.

RACHAEL

When you were alone with him...
did he say anything about me?

ON SARAH...shit. She doesn't want to encourage her.
But she so desperately wants his approval.

SARAH

Just that you seemed...very smart
...and confident. And that you
were pretty.

ON RACHAEL...at the sink, hiding a big smile.

RACHAEL

Really?

SARAH

Yeah.

RACHAEL

That's cool. It's not true but
it's cool.

Rachael picks up a sleeping cat off the counter, holds
him happily in her arms, walks out of the kitchen.

OFF SARAH...watching her go. What has she gotten them
into?

CUT TO:

EXT BERKELEY DANCE STUDIO NIGHT

Hal's truck pulls to the curb, waits. Stacy comes out
of the studio. She's in a neon colored sweatsuit.
She gets into the truck, gives him a quick kiss.

STACY

You look tired. You have those
bags under your eyes again.

HAL

Those bags are skin. It's called
aging.

STACY

A man in my six o'clock class had
his eyelids tucked. He looks
great.

HAL

Stacy, tummies are tucked. Eyes
are pulled, or lifted or nipped.

STACY

Whatever. It worked.

They drive in silence.

HAL

Are you suggesting I have my
eyes done?

STACY

Did I say that?

HAL

No.

STACY

Why are you trying to pick a
fight with me?

HAL

I'm not.

Hal stares at her out of the corner of his eye. Did
she always look this young?

HAL (con't)

Do you know anything about Russian
poets?

STACY

As much as you probably do.

HAL

I don't doubt it. Let's do something
different tonight.

ON STACY...putting it together.

STACY

You mean like have Russian food?

HAL

That's a start.

STACY

Why didn't you say so?

Her face puckers up into a pout.

STACY

I've been dreaming all day of sushi but if you really, really, really want Russian food. I mean I have no idea where we go to get it. But if you insist...

HAL

Another time.

Stacy puts her arm around Hal, scoots over next to him.

STACY

Have I ever told you I love you?

HAL

A few times. Not a lot recently.

STACY

For good reason.

HAL

How long have we been together?

STACY

Nine months. We've been living together for five months. Do you think you're getting ready for the next step?

ON HAL...shit.

HAL

I'm thinking about it.

Stacy kisses his cheek, happy.

STACY

I've got my heart set on a spaniel. I know your first choice is an irish setter but it would be unfair if we didn't at least look at spaniels.

CUT TO:

EXT BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL DAY

The bright light of day. Rachael and Josh are eating

lunch on the school lawn. Josh looks very pleased with himself.

JOSH

I got a call last night from the sperm bank.

RACHAEL

Sorry.

JOSH

No. It's good. They ran my tests. The count. Grade. How fast they swim. They've asked me back. I think they were pretty impressed.

RACHAEL

Really?

JOSH

Don't look so shocked. I do well on tests. You know that.

RACHAEL

I guess it is good news.

JOSH

I'll get forty dollars a pop. I told my parents I'm selling seeds door-to-door. To explain the new increase in funds. They bought it.

RACHAEL

Josh, they'll use your sperm to impregnate women. Have you thought about that? You might be fathering kids.

JOSH

No one seems too interested in doing it with me the old fashioned way....

RACHAEL

What if one of those children came to you...twenty years from now...what would you say?

JOSH

I don't have any money for a nose job. You'll have to live with it.

RACHAEL

I'm serious.

JOSH

It would depend on what they wanted.

RACHAEL

That's it?

JOSH

What would we have in common? They'd know by then about the hives from clam dip. Hopefully someone good will have raised them.

RACHAEL

That's what a parent really is, right? The one who does the growing up stuff...

JOSH

Yeah...maybe...I don't know....

Josh rolls over on his back, stares up at the sky. He's suddenly very serious.

JOSH (con't)

I'd hope the kid had someone who really loved him. Hell, I hope twenty years from now I have someone who really loves me...maybe I'll be in worse shape than the pushy kid.

Rachael rolls over on her back, stares up into the sky, absorbs what he said.

RACHAEL

Josh, you're so smart....

JOSH

(hopeful)

About what?

RACHAEL

He needs me. Maybe more than I
need him.

CUT TO:

EXT HAL JACKSON'S DEALERSHIP DAY

There are balloon arches in front of all the
entrances, and enormous "10% OFF STICKER" banners
fluttering in the breeze.

A small video crew is shooting in front of the
showroom. Hal, in his buckskin outfit, is on top of
an ELEPHANT holding a "10% OFF" banner.

Rachael drives up on her scooter, watches from a
distance.

ON HAL...atop the elephant. He removes peanuts from a
pouch on his lap. The long grey trunk swings up and
vacuums them from his hand as he shouts:

HAL

So come on out to Hal Jackson's
Chevy dealership! Ten percent
off means ten percent more
peanuts in your pocket. Isn't
that right, Tiny?

The animal trainer raises his arms off camera and the
elephant rears up on two legs. Hal holds on for dear
life, waving the "10% OFF" banner.

The VIDEO DIRECTOR, who's watched too much
"Entertainment Tonight" and thinks he's Steven
Spielberg, shouts through a bull horn.

VIDEO DIRECTOR

Cut! Let's go again right away!
Hal, you've got to sit up higher
on Tiny's back. We're losing
you when he rears up.

Hal waves, calls down.

HAL

No problem.

Hal pushes himself forward, grumbling. He looks out
onto the sea of trucks, spots

RACHAEL...

staring at him from the far end of the lot. Their eyes connect.

HAL

She's back.

He calls down to a Production Assistant.

HAL

I need a cigarette.

The P.A. fidgets.

P.A.

I think we're ready to roll again.

HAL

Come on!

The P.A. lights a marlboro, hands in up to Hal.

VIDEO DIRECTOR

Let's make one.

Hal takes a long draw on the cigarette, eyes Rachael.

HAL

She's like the swamp thing. You can't get rid of her.

VIDEO DIRECTOR

We're rolling.

ON HAL...still holding the cigarette. He never replenished his peanut supply. Rachael has him flustered. He cups the cigarette in his hand, smiles into camera:

HAL

This is Hal Jackson from Hal Jackson's chevy dealership inviting you to come on down and see the circus of deals we've got going on the latest models of chevy cars and trucks....

The ELEPHANT swings his trunk up for his peanuts. Hal realizes he doesn't have anything. The elephant gets hold of the cigarette, wraps his trunk around it.

HAL

(faltering)

So come on out to Hal Jackson's Chevy dealership! Ten percent off means a ten percent greater supply of peanuts in your pocket. Isn't that right, Tiny?

ON THE ELEPHANT...as he puts the smoldering cigarette into his mouth, ROARS with pain and then takes off in a FULL RUN.

ON HAL...on top of the elephant. It's like he's riding a bucking cement truck. He grips the elephant's massive neck. His "10% OFF" banner goes flying.

ON THE VIDEO CREW...both horrified and delighted.

VIDEO DIRECTOR

Keep rolling! This is great stuff.

ON HAL AND THE ELEPHANT...stampeding down the rows of Chevy trucks.

ON RACHAEL...impressed. He's very skilled with exotic animals.

ON THE ANIMAL TRAINER AND THE CREW...chasing Tiny and Hal.

ON HAL AND THE ELEPHANT...Hal's hat flies off. He keeps his grip on the elephant as the enormous animal heads for...

THE STREET. Traffic comes to a screeching stop as Hal and the elephant cross four lanes of traffic, charge up the curb, and into a CITY PARK. The elephant continues on his rampage to a LAKE.

ON THE LAKE...Ducks go flying. Mothers grab their children as the elephant and Hal plunge in. The water slows the massive beast.

The elephant wades in deep and Hal disappears under the murky water...He surfaces seconds later, swims in his buckskin cowboy suit to shore.

ON THE SHORE LINE...the video crew, tape still rolling, help pull Hal out. Rachael stands with them, astonished. The Director hugs Hal.

VIDEO DIRECTOR

We got it all! Every second!
I'll win a local Clio award.
Incredible.

The Animal Trainer wades out into the lake, calls for help. The crew heads after them.

Hal breaks away from the group, limps toward the dealership, every step squeaking and dripping with water. Rachael follows him.

HAL

For being at the top of your
class you don't spend much time
at school.

RACHAEL

I have a lot of independent studies.

HAL

I don't want to be one of them.
I thought we'd straightened that
out.

RACHAEL

Are you alright?

Hal keeps moving. He's humiliated.

HAL

I'm fine.

RACHAEL

That was amazing. When you crossed
the street I thought for sure the
logtruck was going to get you.

HAL
(sarcastic)
That was close wasn't it?

RACHAEL
(very sincere)
Yeah.

HAL
Should I be expecting your mother
too?

RACHAEL
No. At least I don't think so.

HAL
What's our agenda today?

RACHAEL
I came to tell you if you ever
need to speak with me....you know,
if you're feeling bad, or whatever,
the door's open.

HAL
What?

RACHAEL
I guess...I wanted you to tell
you...I'm the kind of person you
can count on.

HAL
I'm not.

RACHAEL
I know that.

ON HAL...wincing. He picks up the pace. Rachael
stays at his heels.

RACHAEL (con't)
But it doesn't matter to me.
That's what I came to say. I don't
know what your life is like. But
everybody should have someone. If
you don't, you can call me.

ON HAL...her messege sinks in. He stops.

HAL

Rachael, I'm a forty-four year old man. I've got 114 employees. A multi-million dollar business. You don't need to feel sorry for me.

RACHAEL

I...I didn't mean it to sound that way.

HAL

My life is just the way I want it. And I don't see a place for you in what I've got going. Does that make sense to you?

ON RACHAEL...weakly nodding her head.

RACHAEL

Yes. I mean, no not really, but I understand what you're saying.

HAL

Good. Now go on home. Or to school.

Hal turns toward his office leaving Rachael in the car lot.

CUT TO:

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

ON RACHAEL...all the rows of trucks look the same. She can't find her moped.

She crosses the street away from the main buildings to the service department. Lots of cars and trucks up on hydrollic lifts. Several mechanics. No sign of anyone.

RACHAEL

Shit!

O.S. VOICE

You lost?

She turns around...sees DIEGO...in his early 20's, has an incredible build. He's wearing greasy mechanic

overalls, eating a sandwich.

DIEGO

You need a new smog certificate?

ON RACHAEL...he's amazing. She feels her cheeks burn red. She tries to pull it together.

RACHAEL

I'm not sure...maybe.

He steps closer, looks at her. She's frazzled, but cute.

DIEGO

Where's your car?

RACHAEL

I don't have one. I'm just doing research. For the future. When I do buy.

OFF DIEGO...what's she talking about?

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S OFFICE

Hal is now in dry clothes. He towels his hair, lights a cigarette, looks out the window for any sign of Rachael. In the distance...he sees her moped, still parked where she left it. Now he feels bad.

HAL

Dammit!

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal comes out of his office, stops a salesman. JIMMY.

HAL

Jimmy, have you seen a young girl with red hair? She was wearing a green sweater...

JIMMY

Nope.
(with an insider's understanding)
But if I do I'll spread the word.
She's yours.

Hal turns away, Jimmy yells after him:

JIMMY (con't)
Great job on Dumbo, boss.

The video Director approaches with the crew.

DIRECTOR
Wait till you see this footage!

The Director takes Hal by the arm, pulls him back toward the showroom.

CUT TO:

EXT SERVICE DEPARTMENT SAME

Rachael and Diego are seated on the curb in front of the service area. Diego is eating his lunch. Rachael drinks a soda, has regained her composure.

DIEGO
It's an okay place. They pay overtime. Treat me alright. You got a job?

RACHAEL
I work in my mother's bookstore on the weekends.

DIEGO
That's cool. And during the week?

RACHAEL
(what the hell)
I go to high school. My senior year.

Diego takes a big gulp of his drink, smiles.

DIEGO
So you're not yet street legal.

RACHAEL
Sure I am.

DIEGO
Then let's go to a movie tomorrow night.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S OFFICE DAY

Hal is behind his desk. The full video crew and sales force is in his office. They all stare at a TV monitor watching the morning elephant footage.

When it's over the room bursts into applause. Jose comes into the office.

JOSE

Two TV stations are on the way to view the footage. They want to run it as a news story!

DIRECTOR

I'd better go home to change clothes!

ALBERTA

(this only means more work for her)
We're going to be swamped.

LEE

Alberta's right. Maybe we should order more trucks.

Hal nods. Alberta heads out the door. Hal gets to his feet.

HAL

Okay, everybody back to work, the show's over for now.

JOSE

The show's just starting!

They all file out, thrilled. The Producer hangs back, he's looking at the pictures on Hal's desk. There's one of STACY in a silver frame. He picks it up.

PRODUCER

She's beautiful.

HAL

Thanks.

PRODUCER

Your daughter, right?

HAL
My girlfriend.

PRODUCER
Oh. Sorry.

HAL
That picture's a few months old.

The Producer stiffly smiles, gets out fast. Hal looks at the photo of Stacy, and then back out the window.

In the distance he can see Rachael. She's standing with Diego by her moped. She drives off.

OFF HAL...watching her. After she disappears his eyes come to rest on the trash can. He remembers the photograph, goes to see if it's still there.

ON THE TRASH CAN...it's empty.

CUT TO:

EXT BERKELEY STREETS AFTERNOON

Josh and Rachael walk down Telegraph Avenue, school backpacks over their shoulder.

JOSH
But you went to see your father!
Not to go out with his employees.

RACHAEL
He doesn't know I'm going out
with his employees. And I'm sure
he could care less. At this point
he's not very into me.

JOSH
What's the guy's name?

RACHAEL
Diego. Cool, huh?

JOSH
It's a cool name for a city with a
great zoo. Not a cool name
for a boyfriend.

RACHAEL
Who said he was my boyfriend?

JOSH

One thing will lead to another.
Thank God you're going away to
college. Thank God we're both
going away to the same college.

A slip. Rachael caught it.

RACHAEL

Josh, I don't know where I'm
going. And either do you. And
even if we both go back east we
can't be sure it will be to the
same school.

The street crowd is heavy, They weave through the
pedestrians, still arguing.

JOSH

You're being negative. You know
I hate that!

RACHAEL

I'm being realistic. We applied
to eight places. Just because
they're the same schools doesn't
mean it will work out the same
for both of us!

JOSH

It's because you don't want to
leave Diego, right?

RACHAEL

Dammit Josh, stop!

JOSH

You'd rather stay here and be
close to him than change your
life with me!

Rachael grabs Josh by the arm.

RACHAEL

I said STOP!

He does. People stare. They stand for a fleeting
second in silence. Her arm still gripping his. She

releases him, embarrassed.

RACHAEL

Sorry. I'll call you tonight.

She walks off in silence, leaving Josh alone in the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT CHEVY DEALERSHIP DUSK

Hal is at his desk. Out the window behind him the sun is just disappearing over the bay. Alberta sticks her head in. She has on her coat, her suitcase-size purse is over her shoulder.

ALBERTA

I'm gone.
(she lowers her voice)
Happy Birthday.

Hal looks surprised. With all the commotion he'd forgotten.

HAL

Thanks.

ALBERTA

Don't worry, I didn't tell anyone.
You have plans, right?

Hal smiles broadly, winks.

HAL

Right.

ALBERTA

See you tomorrow.

She turns on her heel and is gone. Hal picks up the phone, dials.

INT BERKELEY DANCE STUDIO NIGHT

Stacy is working on the stretch bar with a handsome young executive. Another INSTRUCTOR comes over.

INSTRUCTOR

You got a call on line two.

STACY

Take a messege.

INSTRUCTOR

It's Hal.

Stacy excuses herself, goes to the phone.

CUT AT WILL...

STACY

(into the receiver)

I'm in the middle of a class.

HAL

Sorry. What's the plan for tonight?

STACY

I teach till ten.

HAL

I'll pick you up then.

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

Hal comes out of the building, walks through the parking lot.

EXT BERKELEY SAME

ON HAL'S TRUCK...as it drives through town. It doesn't appear he has a destination. He stops for a red light. Stares out into the darkening skyline.

The light changes. Hal doesn't move. Finally horns honk and he steps on the gas, continues aimlessly.

CUT TO:

EXT BOOKWORM SAME

The truck pulls to the curb in front of the bookstore. Hal watches as Sarah comes out. He slides down in his seat, disappearing from view.

ON SARAH...as she locks the store.

ON HAL...peeking up from behind the steering wheel.

Sarah gets on her bike, pedals off. Hal does a u-turn, follows her from a distance.

ON SARAH...driving home in her typical kamikaze style. Several near misses with parked cars, moving cars, even a close call with a eucalyptus tree.

ON HAL...admiring her. What a maniac.

Sarah keeps pedaling with Hal behind her until she reaches HOME.

Hal cuts the engine, stares at the house as Sarah disappears inside the back door.

Rachael's moped leans against the garage. The lawn is overgrown. A ragged vegetable garden is off to one side. Finally Hal starts the engine and drives off.

TIME CUT:

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE NIGHT

It's dark. Hal's truck comes back down the street, stops in front of the house. Hal gets out, heads to the front door carrying two brown paper bags.

INT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE SAME

Sarah is in the laundryroom putting on the wash. She looks down at her t-shirt, it says "Free Angela Davis".

She pulls the shirt off, throws it in the washer. She's now in her bra and old sweatpants.

In the KITCHEN...Rachael is feeding one of the cats.

ON RACHAEL...she hears a knocking, walks to the FRONT DOOR. She pulls the window shade aside, sees Hal. She slowly opens the door.

RACHAEL

How did you know where I lived...?

HAL

I followed your mother.

The words just leave his mouth as Sarah walks into the

livingroom in her bra and sweats. She sees Hal. Darts back out of the room.

HAL (con't)
I wasn't in the best form when
you came by today...

INT LAUNDRY ROOM SAME

Sarah enters. What the hell is HE doing at the front door?! She searches for something to put on.

On the door hook is Rachael's purple DOWN JACKET. Sarah tugs it on, starts for the livingroom...stops herself, peeks into the bathroom sees...

her reflection in the mirror. She looks like the Michelin man. She charges out the door into

THE LIVINGROOM

Hal and Rachael are standing in the middle of the livingroom. Rachael stares at her mother...she looks like she's going skiing.

HAL
I brought you something.

SARAH
Why?

RACHAEL
Mother...

Hal hands them each a bag. Sarah begrudgingly takes hers, pulls out a bicycle helmet and reflectors.

SARAH
(dry)
You shouldn't have.

RACHAEL
Mom, he's seen you ride your bike.

SARAH
Helmets are so restrictive and hot. And besides when you have one on you can't hear.

RACHAEL

So how come I have to wear one?

SARAH

Because you're on a motorized vehicle. We'll discuss that later.

(to Hal, blank)

Thank you.

HAL

I knew you'd like it.

Rachael opens her bag. Removes a leather bound atlas. She opens it. Inside is the inscription:

The world's waiting for you. Here are a few maps in case you get lost along the way.

Hal

Rachael stares at the book. Then back up to Hal. Silence. She got to him.

RACHAEL

Thank you....

HAL

You're welcome.

More silence.

HAL

I gotta run.

But he doesn't move. Sarah does. She goes to the front door, opens it.

ON HAL...he starts to cough. It's impossible to tell if it's real or he's faking.

RACHAEL

Would you like a glass of water?

HAL

Maybe..

(more coughing)

What else do you have?

RACHAEL

Coffee, tea...

HAL

(hopeful)

Tea?

ON SARAH....Shit. Hal and Rachael both look at her for approval. She PUTS ON her new bicycle helmet, closes the front door.

SARAH

Mint or camomile?

CUT TO:

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

Sarah, still in the parka and the bike helmet, fills the tea kettle. Hal takes a seat on the counter, reaches for his cigarette pack, remembers, stops.

SARAH

How's your cough?

HAL

Better. It seems to quiet down when I don't smoke.

SARAH

How extraordinary.

One of the large tabby cats jumps up off the floor, curls in Hal's lap.

SARAH (con't)

He's got fleas.

HAL

So do I.
(low to Sarah)
Keep your distance.

Sarah ignores him, gets cups as Rachael goes to the refrigerator.

RACHAEL

Are you hungry? We've got left-over lasagna.

SARAH

He doesn't want that.

HAL

Sounds delicious. I love Italian food.

Rachael takes it out, turns on the oven.

RACHAEL

It will only take a minute.
If we had a microwave it would
be a matter of seconds.

SARAH

Microwaves are carcinogenic. I
won't allow one in the house.

HAL

I agree.

SARAH

So you don't have one?

HAL

I don't use it. For that reason.
I don't use the oven either but
that's another story.

Rachael sets a plate and silverware in front of Hal.

RACHAEL

Would you like some salad? We've
got fresh lettuce from the garden.

HAL

Great.

Rachael goes to the vegetable crisper. Sarah brings him a cup of tea. Hal touches her arm as she lowers the cup. She peers at him, her new bike helmet rests on the bridge of her nose.

SARAH

Anything else I can get you?

HAL

Relax, you're doing fine.

DISSOLVE TO:
THE KITCHEN TABLE...moving past the dinner plate,
coffee cups, an empty carton of ice-cream, a red wine
bottle, a full ashtray...to find Sarah, Rachael and
Hal.

SARAH

Come on, the idea that government
can't help our inner cities is
bullshit. It comes down to whether
leadership and the American
people are willing to spend money
to address the problems.

HAL

That's easy to say, but the problems
are so great, where are the
mechanisms for change?

RACHAEL

I say the federal government is
the only one large enough.

SARAH

She's right. It will take massive
programs, like the War on Poverty
reforms of the 1960's. Job Corps,
Headstart, prenatal and birth-control
clinics. They cost money. Lots
of it.

RACHAEL

But they'll pay off in long term
economic benefits....

SARAH

This nation looks for short-
term solutions. Welfare, prisons.
Lock them up, don't look at what
led them to these circumstances.

HAL

I'm a businessman. I'm more pragmatic
than you two. It's a fierce world.
A competitive world. People won't
make sacrifices unless they feel
personally threatened.

RACHAEL

They should feel threatened. In most inner cities, schools don't teach. Drugs are the law. Crime goes unpunished...the people are angry.

SARAH

To be born into a ghetto in this country is a fate no American should have to suffer. If people could see that, could feel that, they would support change.

ON HAL...these people are passionate. He raises his hands.

HAL

I surrender. You have my vote.

He looks down at his watch. It's 10:30. Big trouble. He quickly gets to his feet.

HAL

I gotta go.

ON RACHAEL AND SARAH...they're sad to see him leave.

RACHAEL

You haven't heard us rant and rave about the oil industry.

SARAH

(hopeful)

Or the worldwide escalation of arms sales.

RACHAEL

Mom does an amazing imitation of George Bush...

Sarah and Rachael follow Hal to the door.

HAL

Maybe next time. Good night.

It's awkward. His eyes connect with Rachael, glide over to Sarah. She holds his stare. It makes them both uncomfortable. He starts down the porch.

HAL

Thanks again. It was the best birthday I remember in a long time.

ON SARAH AND RACHAEL...what?

RACHAEL

It's your birthday?

ON HAL...dismissing it.

HAL

Just kidding.

He crosses the street to his car. Sarah watches, calls after him:

SARAH

Bullshit. Happy Birthday.

He gets into his truck and speeds off. Sarah and Rachael watch in silence as the truck's red taillights disappear into the darkness.

INT TRUCK SAME

Hal looks down at the clock. 10:35. He steps on the gas.

EXT BERKELEY DANCE STUDIO NIGHT

Hal's truck pulls to the curb. No sign of Stacy.

INT DANCE STUDIO SAME

Hal is at the counter with MANDY.

MANDY

She got tired of waiting. One of the other instructors said he's drop her off.

EXT HAL'S HOUSE NIGHT

The pick-up truck pulls into the driveway. A motorcycle is parked at the curb.

INT HAL'S HOUSE SAME

Hal enters. Hears loud laughter. He goes to the kitchen.

INT KITCHEN SAME

Stacy is at the kitchen table with BRUCE, 30. He has a high definition body and short cropped hair with a two foot long ponytail down his back the width of a licorice whip.

HAL

I got there late. You were gone.

STACY

Hal...this is Bruce.

BRUCE

Yo.

They shake hands.

STACY

He's the new weight trainer at the studio. He gave me a lift home.

HAL

Thanks Bruce.

BRUCE

No biggie. Sit down, man.

Hal sits, annoyed.

STACY

(to Bruce)

Hal sells cars.

BRUCE

Hey, cool, I was thinking of getting a new toyota.

HAL

American cars.

BRUCE

That's a bummer.

HAL

Chevrolet has some of the finest cars on the road today.

BRUCE

But they must get shit for mileage, right?

HAL

They do very well.

BRUCE

But they fall apart after the first twenty thousand.

HAL

We have some of the best craftsmanship ratings in the business.

BRUCE

(what horseshit)
Good for you dude.

Silence. Finally Hal speaks.

HAL

I was thinking earlier of the enormous problems of the inner city....

STACY

Why were you doing that?

Bruce stands up.

BRUCE

I gotta cruise.

STACY

(disappointed)
Do you have to?

Hal stands up.

HAL

I know how you feel. I'm beat.

BRUCE

Hey the night's just startin' to
cook. I'm going to hear a new band.
The Trash Can JoJo's. You like 'em?

STACY

Oh sure.

HAL

We own all their albums.

Stacy elbows him.

BRUCE

They're new. They're going to
record when the drummer gets out
of rehab. Stacy, if you guys
wanna hang with us, no prob.

HAL

I think I'll pass.

ON HAL...glancing from Bruce to Stacy. They look like
a modern version of Ken and Barbie.

HAL (con't)

Stacy, why don't you go? You'd
enjoy it.

ON STACY...wow.

STACY

Sounds rad. You don't mind?

HAL

(sincere)

I want you to.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S BEDROOM MORNING

Hal wakes up. The light is streaming through the
blinds. He rolls over. Stacy is snoring at his side.
Hal quietly gets up, heads into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S KITCHEN SAME

Drink glasses on the counter. It looks like an
airport lounge not a place where people live. Hal

opens the refrigerator, looks inside...

a tin of coffee, two rolls of still film and a jar of old hot sauce.

Hal closes the frig, dumps a bottle of scotch down the drain, loads the dishwasher.

INT CAR DEALERSHIP MORNING

Hal enters. He's showered and shaved, looks refreshed for a change. He sticks his head into Alberta's office, she's surrounded by paperwork.

HAL

Nice scarf.

ALBERTA

You gave it to me. Christmas 1983.

HAL

Did I pick it out?

ALBERTA

No, I did.

HAL

It's pretty.

He starts to go. Has a thought.

HAL (con't)

You should take the day off. You work too hard.

ALBERTA

Really?

HAL

I feel good. Take advantage of it.

Alberta grabs her purse and coat.

CUT TO:

INT BOOKSTORE DAY

The busiest day of the week. Sarah and Rachael are both behind the counter.

RACHAEL
I'm going out tonight.

SARAH
Can I come?

RACHAEL
No. It's with a guy I just met.

SARAH
From school?

RACHAEL
From life.

SARAH
If it gets slow I'm going to get
a haircut. This time I think I
might try something new....

CUT TO:

INT DEALERSHIP DAY

Jose and Lee are both leaning over Hal's desk as he
approves offers.

HAL
Take it. But try to squeeze another
two hundred out of them.
(to Lee)
Good going.

Lee leaves, Jose hands him paperwork. Hal frowns.

HAL
No good. Not enough down.
Bad zip code. Bad risk.

JOSE
I thought so. I told them I'd
give 'em a shot.

Hal looks out the glass partition.

HAL
Where are they?

The floor is crowded with customers.

JOSE

The family. With the kids by the far wall.

ON THE FLOOR...on a family. Three young kids. The father holds the smallest on his shoulders.

ON HAL...looking back down at the papers. Feeling bad.

HAL

Take it.

JOSE

What?

HAL

I changed my mind. But tell them if they're late on the payments they can expect to find me personally at their front door.

Jose scoops up the papers.

JOSE

Yessir.

INT CAR DEALERSHIP NIGHT

The Hal Jackson Dealership sign glows in the darkness. Suddenly it flickers off.

ON THE SHOWROOM...Jimmy ushers out the remaining customers. Locks the door.

INT CONFERENCE ROOM SAME

Half the sales force is around the conference room table. Spirits are soaring. Jose is dealing cards, counting chips. Jimmy comes in carrying a case of beer.

JIMMY

We've never had sales like this!

JOSE

Between the elephant spot and the ten percent--

Hal takes a long swig of beer, interrupts.

HAL

--I'm practically giving the damn things away.

A hand is dealt. Hal's mind is elsewhere. He folds without even looking at his hand.

HAL

I'm out.

He gets to his feet.

JOSE

Are you sick?

HAL

I don't feel like cards tonight.

JIMMY

(knowing)

You and Stacy going to that hot tub place?

HAL

Yeah.

They return to their game.

JOSE

Use protection.

Hal walks out of the room. After several seconds the phone rings. Jose answers it.

INTER CUT:

Stacy is at the dance studio. Bruce is at her side giving her a backrub.

STACY

It's Stacy.

JOSE

He just left.

STACY
Where was he going?

JOSE
(is this a quiz)
To take you to the hot tub place?

ON STACY...confused.

STACY
Okay.

She hangs up the receiver, turns to Bruce.

STACY
He's gone. They think he's
coming here....

BRUCE
Then we better boogie.

CUT TO:

INT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE NIGHT

In the bathroom. Rachael is staring at herself in the mirror. She puts on eyeshadow. Looks. Smears on more.

RACHAEL
What a gross color.

She toilet papers it off. Starts over. Sarah enters. She now has RED HAIR. It looks great.

SARAH
Where do you think you'll go?

RACHAEL
He said a movie.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

SARAH
I'll let him in.

RACHAEL
I'll be there in two minutes.

Sarah starts down the stairs...sees...JOSH. She opens the door.

SARAH

Rachael's just about to go out.

JOSH

I know. What happened to your hair?

CUT TO:

INT RACHAEL'S ROOM SAME

Rachael slips on a different sweater, looks out the window into the dark night. Spots Josh's parent's car.

RACHAEL

Shit. What's he doing here?!

INT LIVINGROOM SAME

Josh is now parked on the couch. Sarah is across from him. The doorbell rings again. They both rise.

JOSH

I'll get it.

They both charge the door, open it to find...

HAL. Now Sarah looks shocked.

HAL

I was in the neighborhood and saw lights.

INT RACHAEL'S ROOM SAME

Rachael is at the window in a different sweater ...straining out into the darkness. She spots Hal's truck.

RACHAEL

Oh God! What's he doing here!

INT LIVINGROOM SAME

Josh and Hal take seats on opposing couches. Silence. Hal stares at Sarah.

HAL

What happened to your hair?

The DOORBELL RINGS. Hal gets to his feet, starts for the door, Josh is right behind him. He opens it to find DIEGO. They stare at each other.

HAL
(confused)
What are you doing here?

JOSH
Good question.

DIEGO
I'm going out with Rachael.
What are you doing here?

Hal and Josh begrudgingly stand back, allow Diego to enter.

INT KITCHEN SAME

Hal ushers Sarah into the kitchen.

HAL
(with all the gruffness of a father)
When did she start seeing him?

SARAH
They met yesterday when she went looking for you. He seems like a nice enough kid.

HAL
He's not a kid.

SARAH
Okay, he seems like a nice enough young man. You know him. What's wrong with him?

Silence. Hal's brow furrows. He can't really think of anything bad to say.

HAL
Okay, I admit, he's not a bad kid, but--

SARAH
I thought he wasn't a kid.

HAL

He's not a bad person , it's just
I've seen him with lots of girls.
He's quite a bit older. Experienced.
You know what I'm saying.

SARAH

I think we can trust Rachael's
judgment.

HAL

I don't doubt that. I'm just
surprised that you don't see the
potential problem....

SARAH

Right now I think the problem is
more yours than hers.

ON HAL...She's right. She starts back out the door.
He stops her. Looks grave.

HAL

This is important.

SARAH

What now?

HAL

I love your hair.

OFF SARAH...looking pleased, trying to hide it.

INT LIVINGROOM SAME

Rachael comes down the stairs. In yet another
sweater. Hal and Sarah are on one couch. Josh and
Diego are on the other. They all look up, say hello
in unison. Diego is immediately on his feet.

DIEGO

We should be going. The show
starts in twenty five minutes.

CUT TO

INT MOVIE THEATRE DARK

ON THE AUDIENCE...all staring at the screen.

PANNING ACROSS ONE PARTICULAR ROW....to find
Diego...Rachael...Josh....Hal...and Sarah.

CUT TO:

INT PIZZA RESTAURANT NIGHT

AT ONE LARGE TABLE....Diego...Rachael...Josh...Hal and
Sarah.

CUT TO:

INT PIZZA PARLOR BATHROOM

Rachael and Sarah enter. Go into separate stalls.

RACHAEL (O.S.)

Mom, Diego wants to go back
to his place.

SARAH (O.S.)

Okay.

RACHAEL (O.S.)

Just me.

INT PIZZA PARLOR NIGHT

Sarah and Hal are talking. Diego and Josh are arm
wrestling. It's no contest. Josh loses in three
seconds, demands a re-match. Rachael watches,
mortified.

CUT TO:

EXT PIZZA PARLOR NIGHT

Sarah, Josh and Hal stand at the curb. Diego and
Rachael are inside a late model pick-up truck.
The truck pulls away from the curb.

Josh stares into the darkness. His wrist is now in a
makeshift sling.

JOSH

Mind if I go with you guys and
wait for her?

Hal puts his arm around Josh.

HAL

Go home. You've slobbered over
her enough for one day. You
need a new strategy.

CUT TO:

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE NIGHT

Sarah and Hal get out of his truck, walk to the front door. Alone at last. It's dark, only shafts of moonlight on the porch.

Why does she feel suddenly like she's the one who's seventeen?

SARAH

So....

HAL

So....

SARAH

You probably should be getting home, right?

HAL

I can stay awhile.

SARAH

The woman you live with, she won't mind?

HAL

She works late.

SARAH

So....

SARAH

So...if this were the old days we could smoke a joint.

HAL

(hopeful)

Got any?

SARAH

No.

HAL

Just as well.

SARAH

What do you want to do?

Silence. They stare at each other. They can both think of a few things they want to do to each other.

HAL

(fighting to be logical)

I guess the next step...is to find out if Rachael's my daughter.

SARAH

How do we do that?

HAL

I'm sure a doctor would have a clue.

They look into each others eyes. Sarah feels like she's falling. Hal reaches for her...his hand goes to her side as if to steady her. He draws her closer.

HAL (con't)

It might help us figure out how to proceed....

SARAH

Absolutely. We need to know how to proceed....

His touches her cheek, fingers her hair.

HAL

Because it's confusing....

Their lips are inches apart.

SARAH

It sure is....

They both can't stand it any longer. They kiss. And KISS. It's hot. They lean against the door. It's open and they literally fall inside. Hal lands on top of Sarah.

His hands run over her breasts, up the nap of her neck, through her hair...they're out of control.

ON THE FLOOR...Sarah kicks the front door shut. Hal's

already got her shirt open, her bra undone...

One of the golden retrievers lifts his head, stares.

ON THE OLD HOOKED RUG...LIT BY THE MOON...Hal and Sarah make love.

CUT TO:

INT DIEGO'S APARTMENT SAME

Rachael and Diego are making out on the couch. Diego's hands are inside Rachael's shirt, The slide down to her jeans, begin to tug at the zipper. Rachael pulls away.

RACHAEL

Diego, stop...

He doesn't. She breaks away again.

DIEGO

What's wrong?

RACHAEL

I...I think I should go home. It's getting so late.

DIEGO

You could stay over.

RACHAEL

No I couldn't. My Mom would kill me.

DIEGO

Big deal.

RACHAEL

It is a big deal.

DIEGO

Are you afraid to?

RACHAEL

Diego, I like you. But I hardly know you.

DIEGO

So let's get to know each other better.

Rachael gets out of his grasp, stands up.

RACHAEL

Not tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S LATE NIGHT

Diego and Rachael pull up to the curb. See Hal's truck.

RACHAEL

He's still here....

INT LIVINGROOM SAME

Hal and Sarah are on the floor in a postcoital daze. They hear Diego's truck, scramble for their clothing.

EXT HOUSE SAME

Diego and Rachael come up the walk.

DIEGO

What's the hurry?

Diego takes her by the hand, pulls her to him and gives her a kiss. She's not into it. She breaks apart, starts again for the house. She heads up the front steps, opens the front door to find....

INT LIVINGROOM SAME

Hal and Sarah, fully dressed seated side by side on the couch. The TV is on. They stare intently at the screen.

SARAH

Hi honey.

RACHAEL

Hi.

Hal gets to his feet, stretches. His fly is unzipped.

HAL

We started watching TV. Lost track of time.

Diego glances at the screen. There's a commercial.

DIEGO
What were you watching?

Hal looks at Sarah for help.

SARAH
And old black and white thing.
With tap dancing.

HAL
I'm sucker for those dance
numbers.

Before Sarah's able to turn off the TV set the programming resumes: PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING. Rachael and Diego exchange looks. Diego leans close to Hal.

DIEGO
Speed 45 wide open, man.

Hal zips his pants and then awkwardly shakes Sarah's hand.

HAL
Thanks for the nice evening.

She returns his frozen smile. Hal gives Diego a healthy thump on the back.

HAL (con't)
(low)
You're out of here too, pal.

DIEGO
Right. Good night.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S TRUCK NIGHT

He has the radio on. He is singing.

EXT HAL'S HOUSE NIGHT

Bruce's motorcycle is at the curb. Hal enters. Stacy and Bruce are in the livingroom. Bruce gets up, starts for the front door.

BRUCE
I'll catch you later.

HAL
Don't leave because of me.

Stacy gives him a small wave good-bye. Goes to Hal.
Her eyes are puffy. She's been crying.

STACY
We need to talk....

Hal puts his arm around her.

HAL
I understand. I feel the same
way. Take as long as you need
to pack your things.

STACY
(shocked)
But...I'm breaking up with you.

HAL
However you want to see it. We're
not right for each other.

Stacy starts to cry.

STACY
You mean you don't care that
I'm leaving you? You aren't mad?

HAL
To tell you the truth, Stacy, I'm
relieved. I know you haven't been
a saint. And, well, either have I.

Stacy's eyes harden.

STACY
You bastard! Who is it? You've
been seeing someone else! How dare
you?!

HAL
What difference does it make?

STACY

You don't really care about
anyone or anything!

HAL

Maybe that's true. If it is
then it's a good thing you
found out now.

Stacy picks up a vase and throws it across the room.
She has horrible aim, doesn't even come close. Hal
shrugs.

HAL

Sorry.

STACY

Go to hell!

CUT TO:

INT SARAH'S ROOM NIGHT

ON SARAH...lying in bed in the dark staring at the
ceiling, deep in thought.

INT KITCHEN DAY

Sarah is at the table in her bathrobe drinking coffee.
She doesn't look like she got much sleep. Rachael
comes into the kitchen, gets a bowl of cereal.

RACHAEL

What did you and Hal do once we
left?

SARAH

(as nonchalant as she can muster)
Just got to know each other better.
...Diego seems like a nice guy.

RACHAEL

He's okay.
(she chews for awhile, deep in thought)
Mom, how old were you when you
first had sex?

SARAH

(confused)
Who said we had sex?!

RACHAEL

Come on, when did you and Charlie first sleep together?

SARAH

Ah, we were in college. I think I was nineteen.

(Hal was right)

Are you thinking about having sex?

RACHAEL

Not right this second.

ON SARAH...shit...she should say something parental.

SARAH

The thing about sleeping with someone is that it changes the relationship. And you have to be prepared for that.

RACHAEL

How does it change things?

SARAH

Well...you've given yourself to someone, which you shouldn't do lightly, I mean the body being the temple and all. And it shows some commitment. It should anyway. And you have to know that's what you want.

OFF SARAH...as she stares down into her coffee cup.

CUT TO:

INT LIVINGROOM DAY

Sarah is now dressed, wears her baseball jacket and scarf.

SARAH

I'm going to run errands. I'll be back in an hour.

Rachael nods as Sarah exits.

EXT BERKELEY STREETS DAY

ON SARAH...on her bicycle. She weaves through

traffic, traveling with a purpose.

INT DEALERSHIP DAY

Hal comes in, heads to his office, passing Alberta along the way.

ALBERTA

Moved a lot of vehicles yesterday.

HAL

Yeah.

IN HAL'S OFFICE SAME

He lights a cigarette. He's preoccupied. He picks up the photo of Stacy, puts it inside his desk drawer.

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

Sarah pulls up on her bicycle.

INT DEALERSHIP SAME

Sarah strides through the dealership. Lee rises, recognizes her from before, detours away.

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

Sarah opens the door.

HAL

Hey...sit down.

She doesn't.

SARAH

I've been thinking about last night.

HAL

(smiling)

Me, too.

SARAH

I lied to Rachael. I never lie to her. We've gotten along well enough for seventeen years. We don't need you to ride in on a shiny white horse and rescue us.

HAL

I'm not going to come between you
and your daughter.

SARAH

But don't you see...you already have.
You have your life. You live with
someone. It's complicated. I
can't be a part of it.

HAL

Last night changed that.

SARAH

No. Last night didn't change
anything. It was a mistake. I
don't want you to be Rachael's
father. Or my boyfriend.

She can't look at him.

HAL

That was no bullshit. Can't we
talk about it?

SARAH

No. I'm sorry.

HAL

So...what will you tell Rachael?

SARAH

The truth. I've thought for
too long only of the two of us.
I can't change that.

Sarah walks out the door.

EXT DEALERSHIP SAME

ON SARAH...getting on her bicycle. She starts off
through the lot.

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

Hal is seated. Alberta comes in with a cup of hot tea
and a danish, silently places them down in front of

him. He lights a cigarette, stares out into the gray morning.

EXT BERKELEY DAY

A busy street within a mile of the dealership.

ON SARAH...pumping hard, really moving on her bicycle.

UP AHEAD....the traffic light turns RED.

ON SARAH...not slowing down. She'll go through the light. There's a car coming to her left. She can beat him. She pedals even faster...

IN SLOW MOTION...as Sarah enters the intersection. She's going to make it...the car lays on his horn, brakes, she clears him by a hair, starts to smile when...

A MOTORCYCLE APPEARS from out of nowhere. He must have been obscured by the car. It's impossible for Sarah to stop, or turn, it's too late...

ON THE BICYCLE...as it SLAMS INTO THE MOTORCYCLE. At the point of impact the bike is thrown into the air. It travels twenty...thirty...forty feet. Sarah flies off, landing violently onto the concrete.

CUT TO:

INT HAL'S OFFICE SAME

ON HAL...still at his desk. He places his hand over the tea cup, manipulating the steam in dull silence

IN THE DISTANCE...the sounds of sirens. Hal doesn't even notice.

CUT TO:

INT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE DAY

Rachael walks into the livingroom, stares at the clock. No sign of her mother.

EXT BOOKSTORE LATE AFTERNOON

Rachael drives up on her moped. Looks inside. It's closed.

INT RACHAEL AND SARAH'S HOUSE DUSK

ON RACHAEL...sitting in the kitchen waiting.

EXT BERKELEY STREET NIGHT

Rachael rides her moped through town. No sign of her mother.

EXT BERKELEY STREET SAME

At a payphone. Rachael listens to ringing. No one answers.

EXT DEALERSHIP NIGHT

Rachael parks her moped.

INT DEALERSHIP SAME

Rachael goes to Hal's office. He's gone.

EXT HAL'S HOUSE NIGHT

Rachael cuts the motor on her moped, stares at the house. There are lights on inside. She goes to the front door.

ON THE DOOR...as Rachael rings the bell, waits. The door opens. Hal's been drinking. A cigarette dangles from his mouth.

HAL

Rachael...

RACHAEL

I'm sorry to bother you, but have you seen my mom? I can't find her. Anywhere. She said she'd be gone for an hour and she never came back.

INT HAL'S SAME

There's an open bottle of scotch on the table. Stacks of mail, magazines. A few dead house plants.

HAL

She stopped by this morning.
Around eleven. She didn't stay
long.

RACHAEL

Did she say where she was going?

HAL

No. I'm sure it's nothing. She's
probably with a friend.

RACHAEL

I called her friends. No one's
seen her.

HAL

Maybe she wanted to be alone.

RACHAEL

I'm worried about her...

Hal stubs out his cigarette.

HAL

Let me drive you home. I bet
she'll be waiting for you when
we get there....

EXT SARAH AND RACHAEL'S HOUSE NIGHT

The house is dark as Hal pulls into the driveway.
They both get out in silence.

INT HOUSE SAME

Rachael paces around the kitchen. Hal finally goes to
the phone, tries not to look concerned.

HAL

I'll call the police. It will
set your mind at ease.

He dials...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT ALTA BATES HOSPITAL NIGHT

The emergency doors swing open and Hal and Rachael
rush inside.

INT INTENSIVE CARE NIGHT

ON SARAH...in a hospital bed, unconscious. Her face is cut and swollen, a mass of bruises. She has tubes in her arms, her nose.

Rachael goes to her mother, takes her hand, tears run down her face. A DOCTOR appears in the door way.

HAL

What's the situation?

The Doctor shifts his weight. He is uncomfortable.

DOCTOR

At this point we've been working on keeping up the vitals. They couldn't find any identification on her so we've been in a holding pattern. But decisions need to be made.

Hal leads the doctor out of earshot.

HAL

We're here now. You tell me--what should be done?

DOCTOR

You have to consider surgery for the leg or she'll lose it.

HAL

Then get her into surgery.

DOCTOR

There are risks.

HAL

Such as...

DOCTOR

She might not make it through. And there's no guarantee we'll be able to save the leg even if she does.

HAL

But if she were your wife? The mother of your kid. You tell me-- what would you do?

The Doctor hesitates, Hal holds his gaze, not letting him off the hook.

DOCTOR

I'd operate.

HAL

And I don't have time to find a second opinion.

DOCTOR

She should be coming off the table right now, not going in.

HAL

Then why are we standing here?

The Doctor calls down the hall to an Intern.

DOCTOR

I need her in the operating room immediately.

The Doctor takes one side of the bed, a nurse takes another and they begin pushing Sarah's bed out of the room. Rachael stays at her mother's side. Hal has to pull her off. She can't control her crying.

RACHAEL

(through her tears)

She's going to be alright? Isn't she? Please...

INT HOSPITAL LOUNGE NIGHT

ON HAL AND RACHAEL...in chairs waiting. Rachael silently cries. Hal starts to light a cigarette, stops. No smoking signs are everywhere. He throws the whole pack in the trash.

TIME CUT:

ON HAL AND RACHAEL...Rachael is asleep. Hal is at her side sipping coffee from a styrofoam cup. Low light

comes in the windows. It's daybreak.

ON HAL...staring at Rachael. He takes off his jacket, drapes it over her as...

the Doctor appears in the doorway. He looks as tired as Hal.

DOCTOR

The next forty-eight hours are critical. We just sent her to post-op.

HAL

And...

DOCTOR

Her condition is stable. The leg has multiple compound fractures. I'm still worried about nerve damage. But right now I'm optimistic.

HAL

Thank God....

ON HAL...as he pumps the Doctor's hand.

HAL (con't)

Thank you. Thank you so much.

DOCTOR

Get some rest. It'll be awhile before you can see her.

His eyes narrow, he suddenly realizes why Hal looks familiar.

DOCTOR (con't)

Are you the guy on TV who sells trucks with animals?

HAL

Yeah.

The Doctor starts back down the hall, shaking his head.

DOCTOR
Reckless group.

Hal wakes Rachael.

HAL (con't)
Rachael....

She opens her eyes, registers where she is.

RACHAEL
What happened? How's mom?

HAL
I think she's going to be okay.

Rachael throws her arms around Hal's neck. He holds her, closes his eyes as she begins to cry.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL AFTERNOON

Hal and Rachael walk down a long corridor. They proceed through a set of doors. A nurse signs them in. INTENSIVE CARE.

INT ROOM SAME

Sarah is in the hospital bed...asleep. One of her legs is in a massive cast. Her face has now been bandaged. Rachael stares, immobilized.

Hal goes to Sarah. She looks fragile, even childlike except for the fact that she has a small tatoo of a rose on her shoulder blade.

Hal's hand reaches out, touches the rose. Sarah's eyes briefly open, connect with Hal, then fall shut.

INT NURSES' STATION SAME

At the Nurses station. A thin Irish Nurse is behind the counter. She looks tough. Hal is with her.

NURSE GAUGHAN
You'll have to speak with Doctor Weinberger about that. You're family, right?

ON HAL... What's family these days anyway?

HAL

Of course.

TIME CUT:

At the Nurses station again. Hal is still in the same clothes. Has 36 hours of beard stumble.

HAL

Sarah Mathews in 387 needs more pain killer. And could you locate Doctor Weinberger for us? She has more swelling.

NURSE GAUGHAN

We'll be right there.

TIME CUT:

Rachael waits at the elevators. They open and Josh steps out. He puts his arm around Rachael. They walk to the lounge chairs. Sit. They don't look at each other. Stare straight ahead. Josh reaches for Rachael's hand, holds it.

INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Sarah has been moved to a regular hospital room. Rachael is in a chair at her side asleep. Hal is sitting on the window seat watching them.

CUT TO:

INT NURSES' STATION DAY

Hal comes down the hall. A Nurse snags him as he passes her station.

NURSE

Mr. Jackson...Your daughter went down to the second floor to donate blood. We're asking everyone to.

She points to a banner behind her desk "GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE...GIVE BLOOD"

ON HAL...his daughter. Total strangers even figure it out.

HAL

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT HEMATOLOGY LAB SAME

There's no sign of Rachael. Hal is seated. An Intern is drawing blood.

INTERN

Working 48 hours straight does have a few pleasures. I took blood a few minutes ago from a real babe. My palms started sweating just holding her forearm.

HAL

Redhead?

INTERN

In jeans and a blue sweatshirt. An ass to die for. You saw her?

HAL

My daughter.

The Intern jerks the needle. Hal winces.

INTERN

(totally embarrassed)

Sorry.

HAL

Forget it.

The Intern points to viles of blood behind him.

INTERN

That's her stuff right there. Very sweet girl.

Hal stares at the blood, looks down at his own as it fills the syringe.

HAL

Listen, I need some blood tests. They call it...restrictive polymorphism. Maybe you could help me out.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

Inside Sarah's room. Rachael and Hal are eating take-out Chinese food at the side of the bed. Sarah is asleep. She looks much better.

HAL

If you feel up to it you should go to school tomorrow.

Rachael makes a face.

RACHAEL

Go to school...

HAL

You don't want to fall too far behind.

RACHAEL

Okay.

HAL

I'll be here in the mornings and then you can be here in the afternoons. Even at good hospitals it makes a difference if someone pays attention to what's going on.

RACHAEL

I understand.

ON THE BED...Sarah's eyes open. She watches them. Silent.

HAL

And you need to start going home in the evenings. You have to get a good nights sleep. Invite a friend to stay at the house with you for the next week.

RACHAEL

Okay.

HAL

(just in case she gets any ideas)
A girlfriend.

RACHAEL

How about Josh?

ON HAL...considering.

HAL

Okay.

ON SARAH...closing her eyes. Her face filled with peace.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL MORNING

Hal is in a chair in Sarah's room reading the newspaper while Sarah sleeps.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL ROOM FOLLOWING DAY

Hal enters with a paper bag. He removes a walkman, slips it over Sarah's ears. She springs to life, smiles for the first time in a long time.

INT HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Hal, Josh and Rachael all in Sarah's room. They are playing lawn darts on the linoleum floor.

EXT RACHAEL AND SARAH'S NIGHT

Hal pulls up to the curb in his truck, drops off Josh and Rachael.

HAL

You two going to be okay?

JOSH

Rachael took two years of karate.
I always feel safe with her.

Rachael pulls him toward the house. Waves at Hal.

ON HAL...as he drives away from the curb. He starts toward home. Reconsiders, makes a U-turn.

EXT HOSPITAL SAME

Hal pulls up in front of the hospital.

INT SARAH'S ROOM SAME

Hal enters, takes off his coat, goes to check on Sarah. She looks much better. He pulls a chair up next to her bed, settles in for the night.

Sarah opens her eyes, watches him. He looks up. She silently mouths the words "thank you".

CUT TO:

INT RACHAEL AND SARAH'S NIGHT

Rachael pads down the hall in her flannel nightgown, goes to her room, climbs into bed. Josh appears in the doorway in his jeans, no shirt, no glasses. Rachael stares. He looks pretty cute.

RACHAEL

Hey, thanks for doing this.
Staying here and all.

JOSH

No big deal.

He comes over and sits on the bed. Rachael looks at him again.

RACHAEL

Are you still going to the
sperm bank?

JOSH

Went today. Another check for
forty. And one of the nurses
asked me to the movies.

RACHAEL

Really? Which one?

JOSH

Her name's Zola. You didn't
meet her.

Rachael can't believe it, she's jealous.

RACHAEL

It's cold in here don't you think?

JOSH

Maybe a little.

RACHAEL

You can get under the covers if
you want.

Josh looks at her. Okay. He gets inside the bed.
They're lying next to each other. Silence. Josh
rolls over on his side, stares at her.

JOSH

Rachael...

RACHAEL

Yeah.

JOSH

I love you.

RACHAEL

I know.

She puts her arms around his neck and pulls him close.
They kiss. Slowly they come together...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT HAL JACKSON'S CHEVY DEALERSHIP DAY

Hal opens the door to his office. Looks around. He
hasn't been inside for awhile. For a brief second he
can judge it as an observer.

His buckskin suit hangs on the bathroom door...his
celebrity photos are on the adjacent wall. Hal takes
a seat on the couch as Alberta enters.

ALBERTA

You scared me.

HAL

Sorry.

ALBERTA

What are you doing over there?

HAL

Looking at things. Wondering who
the person was who worked in here.

ALBERTA
Is everything okay?

HAL
Alberta, I have a daughter. She's
seventeen years old. Her name's
Rachael.

He said it. Amazing. It didn't even sound strange.

ALBERTA
I see....

HAL
Her mother is in the hospital.

ALBERTA
You said your sister was in the
hospital.

HAL
I lied. I don't have a sister.

ALBERTA
I wondered why in eighteen years
you'd never mentioned her.

ON ALBERTA....planting her large mass next to him on
the couch. Her edge is gone. After eighteen years
with this guy she does really care for him.

ALBERTA (con't)
Are you okay?

HAL
I feel...good.

Alberta can't believe it.

ALBERTA
I need a cigarette. Got one?

HAL
I quit. Five days hanging out
in a hospital. They wouldn't
let me smoke.

ALBERTA
(her sarcasm is back)

No...

HAL
Medical professionals are funny
that way.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT HOSPITAL DAY

Mid-afternoon. Lots of activity. Hal steps out of the elevator. The INTERN from the lab passes him in the hall.

INTERN
Hey man, I got your lab results.

CUT TO:

INT HEMATOLOGY LAB

Hal comes out of the lab, PAPERS in hand. His face is expressionless. He continues down the corridor toward Sarah's.

ON HAL...his pace slows. He is in front of Sarah's room.

HIS POV...as he looks inside. Rachael is in a chair, her feet propped up on the bed. She is reading one of her biology school books. Sarah is on her side sleeping.

Hal slowly turns. They haven't seen him. He walks back to a waiting area, takes a seat by the window.

MOVING IN ON HAL...backlit by the afternoon sun. He is motionless, unflinching. Tears well up in his eyes, roll silently down his cheeks as he begins to cry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT SARAH'S ROOM AFTERNOON

Sarah is sitting up in bed. Rachael is at the window staring out.

SARAH
Something probably came up at
work.

RACHAEL

Yeah. Should I call?

SARAH

No. We'll hear from him.

INT GREGG'S BAR AND GRILL NIGHT

Hal is on a barstool. Just barely. He has an empty drink and a full ashtray in front of him. The BARTENDER passes, Hal raises his hand.

HAL

Hit me.

The Bartender makes a face.

BARTENDER

I think you've had enough, pal.

HAL

No, I mean hit me. With your fist. Or a plank or something. I'm trying to knock myself out.

The Bartender sees Hal's truck keys on the counter, takes them.

BARTENDER

I'll get you a cup of coffee.

Hal slides to his feet. It's a lot of work. He staggers out the door.

HAL

I don't drink coffee. My system can't take caffeine.

EXT BAR NIGHT

Hal starts to walk, weaves down the street.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Hal steps out onto Sarah's floor. He tries to pull it together, heads toward Sarah's room.

INT SARAH'S ROOM SAME

Sarah is sitting up, awake. Hal staggers in.

SARAH

Hey...

HAL

Hey...

SARAH

You've been drinking.

HAL

A little.

He falls into a chair.

SARAH

I was worried about you.

HAL

I'm okay.

SARAH

What I said about not letting
anyone between us. I was wrong.
We're so lucky to have found you.
She needs a father. And..

Hal interrupts. He had no intention of telling her.
It just spills out of him.

HAL

They had your blood. Rachael
donated. I gave mine. So I asked
the hospital to run the tests. To
see if she were my daughter and...

SARAH

And...

He can't even say it. He shakes his head. He's
losing control. He gets to his feet.

SARAH

She's not...

HAL
 (his voice breaking up)
 I'm really sorry...

He heads for the door.

HAL (con't)
 I'm sure a lot more sorry than
 you are...

SARAH
 Hal! Wait!

ON SARAH...as she watches him go. She can't move.
 She hits her nurses button.

SARAH
 HAL!!!!!!

But he just keeps going.

EXT HOSPITAL NIGHT

Hal comes out, walks into the dark night.

ANOTHER STREET NIGHT

ON HAL...trudging on.

ANOTHER ANGLE...As Hal approaches his truck. He
 climbs into the back, lays down in the flat bed,
 stares up into the stars.

TIME CUT:

ON HAL...asleep in the back of the truck. The street
 is now much darker. It's late. Hal wakes with a
 shiver, sits up, tries to shake off the cold.

He gets out of the truck. Looks through his pockets
 for his keys. He sees the Bar. Goes to the door.
 It's locked. He squints at his wristwatch: 3:00 am.

Hal gets inside the truck, reaches his hands under the
 dash and rips down a mass of wires.

ON THE TRUCK...as the ignition turns over and Hal
 pulls away from the curb.

EXT HAL'S HOUSE NIGHT

Hal turns into the driveway. The truck headlights pan across the front yard over RACHAEL. She's sitting on the steps shivering in the chill night air.

Hal parks the truck, gets out.

RACHAEL

Mom told me.

HAL

I figured.

RACHAEL

She called the doctors. They said back then they used to mix the samples...use several donors...so that no one could ever determine parentage.

HAL

The technique worked.
(he rubs his forehead)
Rachael, it's the middle of the night. You have to go home.
I have to go home.

ON RACHAEL..falling apart.

RACHAEL

You can't walk away from us. I won't let you. I need you. Mom needs you...

HAL

Rachael...I'm not your father. I wanted to be...but I'm not.

RACHAEL

Says who? And why? If my mom can decide she wants a kid and make it happen, why can't I decide I want a father. I don't want money. Or a deal on a truck. I want someone to talk to. Someone to stick up for me. Why can't you do that?!

ON HAL...as this sinks in.

HAL
Because....

RACHAEL
Because of what?

HAL
I dunno. It's not the same.

RACHAEL
You can't come into my life and
change it and then walk away. I
don't care what a lab report
said!

ON HAL...finally able to really look at her.

HAL
I can be your friend...that's going
to have to be enough.

They stare at each other. Eyes locked.

RACHAEL
Okay.

Rachael goes to her scooter. Hal puts his key in the
door, starts to go inside. Stops.

HAL
Dammit it's too late to be driving
around on a scooter! Put the thing
in the back of the truck.

ON RACHAEL...smiling to herself.

CUT TO:

INT TRUCK NIGHT

Hal and Rachael are in the front seat. Hal pulls out
of the driveway.

HAL
How's your mother?

RACHAEL
Upset.

HAL

She better not be moving around.
She'll screw up the leg.

They keep on driving. Silence.

CUT TO:

INT SARAH'S HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Sarah is sitting up in bed. The room is dark. The sound of footsteps in the hall. The door opens. Hal is in the door frame.

SARAH

Did she find you?

HAL

I just took her home.

SARAH

And....

HAL

We cut a deal. She says she needs me. She's probably making a big mistake.

SARAH

Where do you stand?

HAL

She's wrong. She's got it all confused....

He goes to the bed.

HAL

I need both of you. A hell of a lot more than you two need me.

ON SARAH...her eyes glistening. She puts her hand on top of his, holds it.

HAL

Move over.

She does. Hal climbs into the hospital bed with her as we FREEZE FRAME....and HEAR: The Mama's and the Papa's singing "California Dreaming"....as we

FADE TO BLACK....